

Portrayal of Neuroticism in *That Long Silence* and *Wife*: A Critical Study

Richa Rani¹

Dr. Neeraj Kumar²

¹Research Scholar, University Department of English Magadh University, Bodhgaya

²Professor, PG Department of English, Magadh University, Bodhgaya

ABSTRACT

Indian English women novelists have favourably responded to the changed psychological realities of Indian life after independence, give an authentic treatment to this situation. An interesting preoccupation of these writers appear to be delving into the labyrinthine depths of the Indian psyche and showing its relation to society. And nowhere is this concern more obvious than in the novels that figure neurotic characters. The characters are shown as grappling on the one hand with the changed realities of India life and the trauma they entail and on the other hand with the psychic conflicts of personal origin. Shashi Deshpande's fictional works open up new vistas of the psychic realities of the life of modern Indian women. Her deep insight into the complexities of the human mind has enabled her to dive deep into the hidden instincts, faded memories, suppressed desires, half-forgotten dreams lying submerged under the ocean of the 'unconscious' of her women. Her Sahitya Academy Award winning novel *That Long Silence*, has deep psychoanalytic nuances as it studies the impact of conflicting forces, both internal and external, on the psyche of its protagonist, Jaya. Jaya faces a long-drawn agonized psychic conflict due to her temperamental mismatching with her husband. However, this does not happen for several reasons. She has to surrender to family and societal pressures. Not being able to say or write what she feels like saying or writing, she is forced to write what patriarchal society wants to read or hear. Deshpande establishes a perspective that women should be recognized, heard and understood; they must not be kept as cage birds; they must triumphantly sign of their true selves and transcend all sorts of oppressions. Bharati Mukherjee's novel *Wife* narrates the tale of a young woman forced to emigrate to the United States following her marriage. The protagonist of *Wife* is an Indian woman who finds herself in an unknown country which is entirely hostile towards her.

Keywords: Neurosis, Unconscious, Oppression, Psychoanalytic, Suppression

Introduction

In a male-overwhelmed society, a woman has no space to be autonomous. She is reliant on men either on father, husband or son. They are not really given opportunity and autonomy. Slavery to man makes them suffer from the double roles of childbearing and domestic chores. The title of the novel *That Long Silence* depicts the expectation of the novelist keeping in mind the end goal to uncover the female psyche amid the quest of Jaya, the protagonist, for self. She is the protagonist of *That Long Silence* who is a clever woman with graduation in English, an essayist and a columnist had a splendid profession. Feminist development advocates the equivalent rights and equivalent opportunities for women. The genuine spirit of feminism is into take a gander at women and men as individuals. There should not be a sexual orientation bias or discrimination in familial and social life. Establishing sex justice and sexual orientation value is the key aspects of feminist development. In India, women writers have approached to voice their feminist way to deal with life and the man centric family set up. They trust that the specific idea of sexual orientation is not just organic wonder but rather it has a social construction. The novel is about Jaya's expectations, fears, goals, disappointments and later triumph throughout everyday life. The storyteller Jaya, an upper-white-collar class housewife with two young kids, is compelled to consider her life when her better half is associated with extortion. They move into a little level in a poorer region of Bombay, surrendering their lavish house. The novel

uncovers the void of present-day Indian life, where achievement is viewed as a helpfully orchestrated marriage to an upwardly portable spouse with the youngsters considering in great schools. Bharati Mukherjee's novel *Wife* stands out as a unique fictional work by virtue of its insightful probing into its heroine's psyche. The novel falls into the category of the modern novel as it presents an intense inner world of neurotic and solipsistic individual. Instead of trying to combine the freedom of the individual with tolerance for fellow beings, Bharati Mukherjee chooses to glorify the alienated individual. Rootlessness and unreal existence are the main concerns of this expatriate novelist who has set out to make a deliberate distortion of Indian womanhood. Both the writers have recurrently dealt with the dark depths of psychosis by creating sensitive characters in their moments of intense mental struggle leading to neurosis.

Main Thrust

Gender discrimination is evident at every phase in a woman's life. Shashi Deshpande's Sahitya Academy Award winner novel *That Long Silence* is a feminist narrative. The novel sketches the story of an Indian woman who resorts to silence all through her life amidst difficulties, apprehensions and afflictions and finally breaks that silence. It presents Jaya Kulkarni, the protagonist's search for identity and the inner struggle she undergoes in the process of obtaining it. Deshpande reiterates in her novels that this process of self-fulfilment starts within the domestic sphere. The novel is a delineation of memory and the relief the protagonist Jaya finally achieves. Her husband Mohan, an engineer, is indicted for corruption in a business transaction. Jaya and Mohan retreat to a flat at Dadar in Mumbai. Jaya reviews her life. The novel portrays the inner debate in the mind of Jaya besides her search for individuality. For instance, at one point in the novel, to the utter astonishment and dismay of Jaya, she realizes that her name is not featured in the family tree. The novel is enlightenment on the inner self of people who fail to maintain their potentiality when exposed to harrowing confrontations. The novelist through the image of Jaya depicts the crawling one who is unprotected and unshelled. Jaya belongs to average household. From beginning she developed fear of speech for fear of ridicule from males Appa, her father who always prevent her in doing any task of her taste. Her father and brother criticized whenever got opportunities to rebuke. Due to that she jumps into silence which becomes easier to her. Later she avoids confessing to Mohan that she actually likes to watch heads in the movies more than movies, reasons behind this were liberty and freedom shown in threads. Her inability to find words loads Jaya to embark upon a long silent journey. Finally she holds silence, the utter silence. "But the words remained unsaid. I know his mood was best met with silence" (78). The novel reveals psychological distance between Jaya and Mohan. Due to that there is only deep silence which leads to unhappiness in Jaya's life. Before her marriage she is taught lets without caring her emotions and feelings. Vanita mami tells her that a husband is a sheltering tree. Ramu kaka reminds her that the happiness of her husband and home depends entirely on her. Her brother advises her, to be good to Mohan (13). She has to mould herself according to the needs and desires of her husband. She gives up her job that she wanted to take the baby she wanted to adopt and the anti-price campaign she wanted to take part in. Mohan blames her to be careless to his family time to time but she does not speak. Through Jaya the novelist depicts the inhuman behaviour and treatment of man-made society towards women whereas both are the two sides of the same coin so can't be separated. Under the same roof Jaya and Mohan have two different lives – Mohan dictating terms. And Jaya following them silently. Jaya wants Mohan to repent for his crime, but his words that he does it for the sake of the family, have been, cherished on her Soul. She finds it very difficult to detail herself from the crime. Thus we find that the relationship between Jaya and Mohan is never very much pleasant but disturbing her throughout life. Bharati Mukherjee is an award-winning novelist who is known for her bold female protagonists who dare to challenge the established order of society. Dimple is a naive girl who has nurtured many dreams regarding her marriage. She hopes for freedom and fulfilment in her marital life. Instead, being a naive believer in an idyllic concept of love and freedom, she has remained unaware of the dangerous ambiguity between the concepts of love and freedom in practice. Dimple's myriad experiences, like her marriage to Amit Basu, her journey to America, along with her fantasy world of the idiot-box, give the reader a whole picture of diasporic life, including its joys and sorrows, struggles and strife, dreams and realities, as well as its pains and pleasures. Dimple is torn between her powerlessness in reality and the fantasy of freedom she expected from marriage. So far, Dimple has lived in the fantasy world of advertisements and advice columns. She fails to understand others, including her husband, Amit. Dimple's dreams of the ideal wife Sita in Ramayana with all the humility, sacrifice, responsibility and docility of character she possesses. The novel explores and effectively captures the transition of a docile and submissive female protagonist to a disillusioned and unhappy woman on the brink of insanity. Dimple passes through the phase of a young woman in her own land to being an expatriate and an immigrant, experiences which are analogous to Bharati Mukherjee's own life experiences. At the end of the novel Dimple becomes a victim of the gap between her unmet expectations and the reality available to her, which in turn makes her more violent.

Conclusion

The study of neurosis paves way for probing into the inner crises that the characters suffer from. Precisely speaking, the study of inner crises cannot be completed without exploring neurotic dispositions of the characters. There are host of writers who put themselves to the delineation of inner crises of their characters. The women novelists in India writing in English, particularly of the second generation, indulge in exploration of the psyche of their characters. That Long Silence explores the silence, isolation, demeaning identity, marriage disharmony of an independent woman Jaya. The character of Dimple symbolises the predicament of plight of women who is forced to lead dual life without thinking about delicate emotions within herself. Dimple's feminine sensibility makes her introvert and she always escapes from the real world. We all have fascination of the Western life and world but nobody can think about women who are suppressed because of cultural and communication gap. Both the writers explore fears, desires, isolation, trauma and anxieties which exist in the consciousness of the characters in a subtle way.

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