Chapter - V

The Fictional Devices

Historically the meaning of metaphor has derived from Greek word. Encyclopedia Britinnica defines the terms as under:

"A figure of speech an implicit comparison between the unlike entities. A metaphor makes a qualitative leap from a reasonable, perhaps prosaic comparison to an identification or fusion of two objects".¹

Princeton Encyclopedia of poetry & poetics analyses the metaphorising process thus. To a wholly new sensational or emotional experience one can give sufficient origination only by relating it to the already known one. This is the psychological basis of the metaphorising process; to grasp the unknown through the known with the help of the imagination.²

To sum up this discussion on metaphor one may that metaphor is identification of one object with another while identification of one object with another while imagination works as a catalyst with a new to capture the unknown with the help of the known.

Through analogies, similies and metaphors, an author renders his expressions, concise concrete and condensed of all the literary devices employed by an author, metaphor speak volumes of his or her mental attitude and concentration of
vision. That is why Aristotle allotted the pride of place to metaphor in an artistic creation. He remarked: "But the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others and it also a sign of genius ...........".³

Obviously, a metaphor is very helpful in image making in concretising emotions and in crystallising moods. As C. Day Lewis maintains, "An epithet, a metaphor, a simile may create an image...........⁴ A metaphor is, thus a recognised literary device to capture the intensity of an artist's creative vision and the fertility of his imagination. In a brilliant essay, Middleton Murry attributes the qualities of 'intensity' and 'fertility' in artistic matters to the 'non-measurable world' created with the help of metaphors.

"All metaphor and simile can be described as the analogy by which the human mind explores the universe of quality and charts the non-measurable world".⁵

In other worlds metaphor is closely related to 'the universes of quality' in artistic creations. This chapter endeavours to explore some of the recurring metaphors in the fictional works of Shashi Deshpande. These metaphors include 'the dark' and 'the sunlight', 'death' and 'life', 'silence' and 'the binding vine'. They tend to neatly summarize the fluctuating moods and the mysterious emotions of a sensitive women. Though these metaphors are not too many in number, they

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put on the track the running wheel of her fictional world. They clearly reveal the inner workings of the protagonists minds and the emotional ripples in their hearts.

Her first novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), is built around the metaphors of 'the dark' and 'the light'. There was a time when Sarita (or Saru), the protagonist, was afraid of 'the dark' at night fearing that a man would invade her body and commit monstrosities upon her. The woman who had been so defiant in her childhood and adulthood, felt utterly helpless and panic-stricken with the approach of the terrible dark. She described her miserable condition in the following manners:

"Panic and terror mounted in me as the hands, deliberately with a kind of casual cruelty, gradually tightened round my throat oh god, I was going to die".7

The suffocating dark, the heavy weight the pain and the hurt associated with the sexual act made her life a hell, and she longed to see the light, to have relaxation, and to emerge out of a sickening state of Ennui, boredom and exhaustion.

In this novel, the metaphor of 'the dark' is inseparably linked with "Panic and Sensation" Simultaneously (12).

As the novel opens, Sarita is already in the grip of "the familiar irritation, the familiar exasperation" (17) owing to an unbridgeable gulf between herself and her husband even after
their companionship of fifteen long years. She is a medical doctor by profession and self-reliant woman by all means, yet her marriage with Manohar (or Manu) has not proceeded smoothly. So, she turns back to her parental home, leaving behind her children. She is seized with a "strange new fear of disintegration" and a "terrified conscious of not existing" (22). The real cause of the disintegration of the family is a searching interview of Manohar by a lady reporter for a women's magazine: "How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but bread as well?" (35-36). Since then, Manohar become a sadist torturing Saru in bed at night. Her dreams of a happy home with children twittering about and a loving husband to prop her up in the struggle of life are now totally shattered. She wants to "Sleep peacefully the night through. To wake up without pain to go through tomorrow without apprehension" (27), but she does not find the congenial atmosphere of her parental house and its peaceful surrounding.

Saru's parental home is in contrast to her spousal home where in her own words, "Terror waited for me in our room I could not escape it" (79). Her desire to disclose the tortures and terrors of the night to Manu evaporates into their air with the appearance of the sun on the eastern horizon. But when Manu goes an repeating his actions at night, Saru goes away, leaving behind her family and associations and also aches and bruises and apprehensions. To her father she confesses her
tortures and terrors caused by Manu, reducing her to a "two in one woman" and a "terrified, trapped animal" (134). She has certainly suffered unspeakably and at times she thinks that her sufferings are a return to her own misdeeds in the past of the drowning of Dhruva in a deep pond in early childhood; of the miserable death of her disgruntled mother, and of her improper conduct as a housewife (undue favours from an ambitions man like Boozie). Her terror persists with her like a canker: "When the light comes on, it goes away when the dark comes, it returns" (205). At moments she feels like "a trapped animal" (215) full of desperation, loneliness and failure. The 'dark' engulfs her completely and she yearns for the 'light'. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, 'the dark' and 'the light' are frequently used as the contrastive metaphors while the former denotes fear and sorrow, defective and estrangement the latter signals joy and fearlessness company and compassion.

The metaphor of 'the dark' with the same signification, is also used in one of the short stories of Shashi Deshpande. The story *It was Dark* brings out the miserable lot of an unmarried girl having been molested by an unknown young man resulting in an unspeakable shock to her owing to an illegal pregnancy. In the story the man is identified with "the dark" or with 'the evil'. The unfortunate girl of the story eventually veers around the idea that the 'dark' represents the engines of tyranny and forced submission: "There was no enemy by the dark, not fear but the fear of being alone". The
metaphor of 'the dark' is here associated with fearfulness and tyranny.

Another dominant metaphor operating in Shashi Deshpande's fiction is 'death', which remains in sheer contradiction to 'life'. In two of her earlier novels - IF I Die Today (1982) and Come Up And Be Dead (1983) this metaphor comes out clearly, though in later novels, too the idea of 'death' is not altogether absent in IF I Die Today and Come Up And Be Dead the metaphor of 'death' becomes powerfully evocative and assertive.

As If I Die Today begins, we are introduced to Guru coming from his village to get admitted to a modern college and hospital set up by Sethji for the treatment of cancer. As disappointed Meera states the following about the pitiable condition of Guru:

"............. Ashoka tells me there's no hope for him at all. His going to die I mean, they're going to operate on him, ........ He'll die in any case".9

Though other are scared of Guru's impending death, he himself is not. Philosophically he remarks: 'If I Die Today, you die tomorrow"(7). Clearly Guru has "risen above all human weaknesses and crossed that dreadful barriers ........ the eternal human fear of death" (9). According to Manju, Guru is a detached 'spectator', and Meera also thinks of him in the same way. Manju and her husband Vijay, however, live in a
world of make belief and speculations. Manju even laughs at Guru's matter-of-fact approach to life. The Dean, his sister Dr. Vidya Agarwal, and Dr. Kulkarni seem to be very serious about their medical profession. Dr. Vidya is an abnormal woman—a case fit for the Psychiatrist. She leads a seduced life with her brother, while her sister-in-law, Rani, lives far away in a flat in Bombay. Rani joins the Dean only when her two children return home from the boarding schools. Dr. Vidya's occasional derangements are so fierce that she first kills Guru, then Tony, and finally makes an unsuccessful bid on Vijay. She appears to be always disarrayed and Jittery, always fear-ridden and shame-faced. At the dinner hosted by Rani, Guru and Manju speak of a convict who has slain "more than forty people" (27). The medical campus is also agog with deaths & murders, including that of a labour leads Prabhakaran, Bande. Thereafter Guru dies "in his sleep" (53), and it is whispered around that he was murdered by one of the medical staff. Then the death of Sumanta's wife is reported and an erstwhile nurse Vimala is implicated in it. Tony is also killed for his quarrel some out spokenness. As sensitive, Mriga, Dr. Kulkarni's daughter informs: "Tony uncle .......... he's dead. He's floating in the tank near the temple" (88). This very girl once dreams of her imaginary accident and her admission to a hospital where her rude father would come rushing, and then she would console him: "Don't carry Daddy and then I would die with a smile on my face and he would be heart broken for
ever after". (91) The girl wished that her parents were dead, particularly her hard hearted father. Towards the close of the novel, Dr. Vidya behaving like an "insane animal" (133) in one of her fits makes a murderous assault on Vijay in the dark of night. The metaphor of 'death', as stated earlier, works as a contrast to that of 'life' about which the narrator remarks: "Every human being has the right to live out his full span of life" (137).

The metaphor of 'death' is emphatically employed in *Come Up And Be Dead* (1983). The novel opens with the premature death of Mridula Dutta of the 10th standard. Some think that she died of "brief illness" caused by a terminated pregnancy. While others believe that it was a case of suicide (23). Though the novel briefly mentions the "Peaceful, tranquil death" (98) of Devayani's (or Devi's) father it is largely preoccupied with the mysterious death of Mridula. First they suspect Pratap, the nutty brother of the school Head mistress working as a peon-Gardener there, to be the cause of her sad death, and the Head Mistress is also implicated in the case. In the midst of rumors of foul, Pratap is called out of his room and killed in cold blood. According to the narrator Devi, "Pratap's death had been no accident. He had not died because of a fall from a ladder. Someone had killed him" (144-45). Thereafter Mrs. Jyoti Raman, the weakened and spectre thin mother of Sonali (or Sona) is "strangulated with her own Scarf" (72) on the occasion of the Annual festival. Last of all, the
seventeen year-old Sharmila is stabbed by her own lover, Sanjay. The last few pages of the novel inform us that Dr. Girish, who is ever in need of ample money for his demanding, smart and spendthrift wife and Mr. Varma, who is "a sorrowful widower"(264) are the real villains of the piece; of the two, Mr. Varma is worse for having run a call-girl racket at the hotel open Sesame.

The two novels If I Die Today and Come Up And Be Dead contain a lot of thrill and suspense in them, and they clearly betray Shashi Deshpande's regarding in Agatha Christie and Sherlock Holmes. The same sort of atmosphere also pervades in The Binding Vine (1993). The narrator, a clever and sharp-tongued woman collected Urmi (or Urmila), is seen grieving over the ultimately death of her young daughter Anu. Her sailor-Husband lives far off, and is a rude and rough person. The narrator does not want to die in any situation, instead, she says, "......I would feel life tingling through me. I was alive, I could not be dead, I would never know what it felt like to be dead"10. Urmi busies for a while in the poetry of her long dead mother-in-law, Mira, whose poetry, like her life was full of pity, rage and anguish (67). Mira bled to death after her child, Kishore (Urmi's husband), was born (136). The heart-rending story of Mira runs parallel to the equally, or even more disgusting story of Kalpana, a young and beautiful girl hanging between life and death, scuttling between home and hospital. Kalpana is also a victim of rape and torture, and her
helpless mother, Shakuntala (or Sakutai), is terribly upset and shocked over the cruel incident. Commenting on the deteriorating condition of Kalpana, the narrator says:

"...............I notice how the contours of her face have changed, the bones pushing themselves against the Parchment-like skin. There is a kind of deathly stillness about the body, the face almost a mask in its rigidity" (109)

Sakutai wants her own death as well as that of her daughter (177). The title of the novel in fact, comes from the last poem of Mira's on the theme of love. The "binding Vines" for Urmì are her son Kartik and her mother Inni; for Akka it is Bhaskar, for Shakutai, her daughter, Sandhya and her sister Sulu, and for Vanna's, her man Harish. In the course of the story, however, Shakutai's kind and loving sister ends up her life by setting herself a flame after sprinkling "a whole bottle of kerosene" (188). Some how Sulu comes to know that her own husband has wrecked the life of Kalpana to satiate his wolfish desires, and she is left with no option but to commit suicide. However, the novel ends on an optimistic note and in the midst of deaths, rapes and tortures, the narrator is seen searching for "the spring of life" (203).

The metaphor of 'death' is also operative through on a much smaller scale, in Shashi Deshpande's short story entitled "Death of a child". This story deals with the problems of a woman's unwanted pregnancy and her subsequent decision to get it terminated. The woman is always obsessed
with the question of her own survival: "I don't want it. I can't". She heaves a sigh of relief when the child is finished and yet remarks: "I feel as we walk away that I am not alone. I feel that the ghost of my dead child walks with me".

In Shashi Deshpande's novels 'Silence' recurs insistently. Saru says in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* "Silence had been a habit for us" (199). "Indu in *Roots And Shadows* (1983) says about her cold relationship with Jayanta that "I am passive and unresponsive I'm still and dead; " and in *The Binding Vine*, Urmi adopts a posture of 'Silence' on being asked by Bhaskar, her lover, about her none too happy marriage with Kishore. "I can say nothing. The silence stretches between us" (161). But it is in the Sahitya Akademi-award-winning novel *That Long Silence* (1988) that the metaphor of silence is worked out majestically. In this work, the narrator heroine's dreams of having a happy home with her husband Mohan and children move to be a chimera at long last. The corrupt practices of her husband in his office and his overgrowing jealousy towards her literary career create a wide chaser between them, and they adopt an unbreakable yet unnerving silence towards each other. As elsewhere, here too 'Silence' denotes lack of communication, frigidity of feeling, and want of understanding and compassion. Being devoid of emotions in real life, Jaya's short stories becomes emotionless and puerile. As Sarabjit K. Sandhu remarks:
"Thus unhappiness is reflected not only in her [Jaya's] conjugal life, but also in social life. Her books, her short stories lack anger and emotion".\(^\text{14}\)

The result is that Jaya loses her "Personal vision", \(^\text{15}\) her individuality and her identifiable features and that she miserably fails in her writings. A strained relationship with her husband creates a void in her married life, which ultimately results in failure and frustration in her creative activity. There is a complete communication gap between the couple and they drift a part. Jaya finds a good companion for herself in her neighbor Kamat, and she discusses with him her personal problems in an uninhibited way. In due course, they become so intimate with and fond of, each other that they start making physical advances. After his sudden death, Jaya continues to live with Mohan but in a mood of "emptiness" (185) when the mood of Loneliness and truncation over powers her, she realizes the mistake of leading a marooned and cocooned life, and finally resolves to "erase the silence" between herself and Mohan (192). Her resolve to speak to her husband and to listen ten to him intently cuts the ice. Both Jaya and Mohan realise that they are complementary to each other in real life. They being to speak the human tongue and express human emotions and thus usher in a new kind of life based on understanding and harmony. To the relief of readers, the wall of 'Silence' is broken as under at the close of the novel.
All the novels examined above combined enforce the idea that the novelist has all along been striving towards self-discovery or quest for identity. In them she makes a powerful study of female Psyche and its problems. She unmistakably highlights women’s helpers and helpless situation, their existential dilemma, their want of understanding or compatibility with their husbands. Even a cursory glance at her novels like. The Dark Holds No Terrors and That Long Silence corroborates it. In The Dark Holds No Terrors, Saru is riven between two selves: in other words, she is a ‘two-in-one-woman’ and a terrified trapped animal.(134) She marries an educated boy out of her caste and against the wished of her parents, but after a few years of happy married life she feels suffocated and estranged from him and drifts a part. Saru is a successful doctor and earns the bread and butter for her family, while her husband is a poor college teacher depending largely upon his wife in financial matters. An unexpected interview by a lady reporter for a woman’s magazine turns Manu a Sadist’, who adopts all sorts of trick to torture his wife at night. As a result she becomes totally terror stricken and tension ridden. Her helplessness in the given situation is pathetic.

The dream, the nightmare whatever it was, continued changing now, like some Protean monsters, into the horror of rape. This was not to be death by strangulation; it was a monstrous invasion of any body, wriggling under the weight
that pinned it down. It was impossible I was Pinioned to a position of an object surrender of myself. I began, in sheer helplessness, to make small whimpering sounds, Piteous cries" (11-12).

Getting no respite from her nocturnal and terrors. Saru decides to leave for her parental house, leaving behind her two children and husband only to return at the end of the novel. The message seems to be that a married woman has no other place to live and be happy than her husband's. No proper remedy is offered to Saru's terrors and tortures, to her emotional and mental hurts. Her pitiable conditions remind us of those of Sita in Anita Desai's novel, *Where Shall We Go This Summer* (1975). Both Sita and Saru are faced with an identical dilemma in their lives. They are not their normal selves by any means. Their existential problems do not allow them rest or relief, and in utter helplessness they run away to their parent's homes, hoping against all hopes to get over the sense of frustration and alienation. Surely, both of them go out in search of 'self' or in quest of identity.

That Long silence depicts Jaya as torn 'self' or a split personality. Jaya is shown reflecting on what she was before her marriage and what she has become after it. Hers is a peculiar dilemma 'to be; or not to be'. In the span of Seventeen long years of married life, she is blessed with a son and a daughter. But her husbands corrupt practices at his Bombay office and the ensuing inquiries and Jaya's unredeemed
domestic drudgery and tortuous confinement to the Dadar flat wreck her conjugal life. Adele King characterises these unfortunate developments as "odd misfits" and " Petty bickerings over money" and "Jealousy over affections". Jaya's relations, as a consequence, with her man into a rough weather, and they become cold towards each other observing an unbreakable 'Long Silence'.

The trouble arises from Jaya's fitful anger, and she calls Mohan's mother a 'Cook' (which she certainly was). Mohan has never expected this from his well-educated and well cultured English speaking-wife, and he has always through that anger makes "a woman unwomanly" (83). His dreams are now shattered, and he slumps into a long drawn silence. This worries too much and she starts wondering whether "there is such a thing as one's self, intact and whole, waiting to be discovered" (69). Jaya is actually a victim of circumstances, of "an atmosphere of apathy and boredom". She is an alienated 'self' longing for love and companionship. It is at the close of the novel that she moves towards the realizing of her true 'self'. Thus, the search for self discovery or the quest for identity forms a recurrent motif in Shashi Deshpande's fiction and the dominant metaphors used in it strengthen the mortify.

This is further borne out by the short story entitled "I want..........." where in a good deal of self searching or self exploration is carried on. The story has a twenty seven year old Alka as it protagonist she is young and unmarried and
subjected to "the insolent statues and the impertinent questions". She feels uneasiness, consternation and hopelessness, and broods; "The woman in me was outraged and protested. I crushed her. She had no place there. None at all". She is terribly upset within and remarks: "Sometimes I feel we are all doomed to be strangers to one another, forever sealed in separate glass Jar's we call 'self". What keeps Alka apart from the commonality of women in her strong sense of 'Self '; which she wants to preserve at all cost. In a mood of self preservations she says: "I had a shape and form I had to preserve. A self I had to treasure". Evidently, she is a woman of self consciousness, and wants to discover her integral personality. As for her marriage, she has little choice of her own; moreover, her parents are there to safeguard her interests. But being a thoughtful woman, she has her own desire to fulfill. Though she does not desire a husband having a four figure salary or a car, "she still wants a man who hears my voice when I speak, who understands me even when I don't...........". At the close of the story, she accepts the reassurances of her Baba (who immediately reminds us of suites Baba in The Dark Holds No Terrors). Clearly, Akka wishes to shed off the slough of despairs and darkness and to emerge in a world of companion ship and sunlight.

Thus Shashi Deshande has woven a delicate and subtle texture of her fictional world with a good deal of thought and
dexterity. Though the metaphors used in her novels, they powerfully highlight the dichotomy of human life, characterized by sorrow and joy, failure and success, death and life, alienation and attraction, there by setting the scale of existence balanced and reasonable, through the scale sometimes does swing towards misery and anguish, death and destruction, hopelessness and helplessness. These metaphors also revived that Shashi Deshpande's world like Jane Austen's is a small and closed one, where the novelist is definitely at home.

Many modern critics believe that in the part too much attention was paid o the letter story or plot overlooking psychological aspects. Some modern novelists have written novels that are experimental and for removed from the traditional story –telling methods according to Somerset Maugham, these writers who are dubbed anti-novelists, “consider the telling of a story for its own sake as a debased forms of fiction”.23

The narrative technique employed by the novelist is also gaining importance, considering the gradual increase I the different methods of story telling. Plain narrative telling is still the most common method employed by the novelist who is omnipresent and omniscient in this type of writing. The first person narrative is usually employed by the novelist and more credible which novels written is such a manner have a ring of authenticity to them, they do not enable the novelist to look
deep into the minds and motives of the rest of the characters. Shashi Deshpande overcomes this problem by using a combination of the very first person and third person narrative coupled with flashback devices to lend force and realism to the novel. A chronological analysis of Deshpande’s development as a novelist requires a keen study of the narrative techniques employed by her beginning with her first full length novel, **Roots And Shadows**.

The novel essentially deals with the protagonist Indu’s painful self-analysis. The author also tries to encompass several other themes in this slim novel. Apart from the obvious and central theme of Indu’s relentless probing to discover herself, here is the theme of bohemianism in the person of Naren in stark contrast to the middle-class values of Indu’s family. There is the middle-class values of Indu’s family. There is the theme of woman’s fate in general which is brought to the reader’s notice, unobtrusively, in the form of Indu’s observations. There is also theme of the old order giving way to the new-symbolised by the demolition of the old house to construct a hotel. As Shama Futehally observes: “this slender oval attempts in a way to encompass too may themes, and is unable to develop them beyond making reflections on each are almost in the nature old asides”. Other critics like Madhu Singh, however, are highly appreciative of her skill in interweaving myriad themes into a coherent whole comparing **Roots And Shadows** with **That Long Silence**, Madhu Singh
points out that the formers more powerful of the two and its strength and the punch, lies in its succinctness.

To capture, the interest of the reader Deshpande avoids the simple technique of straight forward narration, and instead employs the flash back method while the first chapter deals with the present, the later chapters move backwards time , culminating in the final chapter which again ends in the present. This convoluted narration has come in for some criticism by reviewers who feel that it has only contributed to creating confusion in the mind of readers the first person narration in Roots And Shadows also allows the author to robe deep into he mind of the protagonist, exposing her fears and frustrations with admirable candor, inviting the praise of reviewers like C.W. Watson, who compares Deshpande to the master story teller, Chekhov: “other South Indian writers have been compared to Chekhov, but Shashi Deshpande, in this novel at least, comes closest to that writer, and the tragic-comedy to The Cherry Orchard is constantly recalled in the description of the crumbling house and the squabbling of the family. The writing is beautifully controlled and avoids the temptation of sentimentality which the subject might suggest and again the control is reminiscent of Chekov.25

The Dark Holds No Terrors is commendable for its honest portrayal of the psychological problems faced by the protagonist, Sarita, a career woman, achieves a rare level of authenticity of the narrative from the first person to the third
in every chapter. When asked by Laksmi Holmstrom in an interview as to how she had hit upon this technique, Deshpande replied.

"The present is in the third person and the past is in the first person. I was doing it throughout in the first. But that's after a perspective I was in my short stories. I wanted to be more objective. So them I tried it in the third. But it wouldn't work at all. Yet I really needed to distance myself from the narrative in the present otherwise it was going to be far too intense. And then I read an American novel by Lisa Alther where she uses this method. And the minute I came across her novel I thought —let me admit it freely—oh God, this is how I am going to do my novel." 26

This is how the novelist manages to tell the story objectively, and at the same time, "No summary will do justice to the intricate web the author has woven through the superimposition of the past over the present, through dreams, nightmares, flash back introspection and simple straightforward third person narration". 27

That Long Silence is a complex novel of despair and triumph, of suppression and freedom, all played out for the better part in the Protagonist's mind through memories and recollections. The narrative with its slow unknotting of memories and unravelling of the soul reads like an interior monologue quite similar to the stream of consciousness technique employed by the likes of Virginia woolf. A
particularly bad patch in the narrator's life makes her bring alive her past through ruminations. Prema Nanda Kumar, however, maintains that the novel is not a forbidding stream of consciousness probe in the style of Virginia Woolf. It is conventional and has social realism evoked by links of memory. Not merely a misty recollection but clear-eyed story telling. The narrator achieves a kind of catharsis by an objective analysis of what went wrong with her marriage and why she had failed as a writer.

The Binding Vine differ in its mode of narration from her earlier novels. The narrative structure in Roots and Shadows, The Dark Holds No Terrors and That Long Silence does not Progress Chronologically, but instead moves back and forth thematically, gradually relating one incident after the other until the entire story is revealed. In The Binding Vine, however, individual plots of three different stories are interwoven bringing together three women separated by age, status and education. The entire story in narrated in the first person by Urmi. To offer deep and intimate glimpses into the life of the narrator's mother-in-law, Mira, Deshpande uses the poetry and writing in her diary and note books. Urmi is able to brilliantly recreate the story of Mira-her unspoken anguish and outrage at being subjected to rape within marriage.
Shashi Deshpande’s clarion call to modern women in her novel *The Binding Vine* is loud and clear. The Patriarchal, chauvinistic and indifferent Indian male role is challenged. The inner most recesses of a woman’s heart are brought to light through the perspectives of the Protagonist, Urmi. Death of a second child forms the occasion for a Journey into the past, into oneself and into the future. The experience is one which minutely analyses all the relationships a woman in the Indian society is subjected to. There are moments of revolt, deep-felt anger, desire to set things right, retreat from steps which would shatter the sense of well being and fulfillment mirrored through these relationships. The final resolution is one which points at a relationship that is healthy, Satisfying, something that is based on love and the wish to help, rather than drown the soul into the quagmire of the ‘dark night’. The narrator is a woman and is mainly the woman’s perspective that is presented in the novel. The keynote of the novel is struck right at the beginning where Urmi determines not to be plaster cast into a stereotyped image by people around her.

The female consciousness has suffered during the moments ushered in by external events such as death or rape, and such experiences suppress her into the quicks and of traditional and submissive roles, but it is the emergence of the modern woman, individualistic and confident that is finally achieved. The two central ideas the lead the protagonist into an analysis of women’s issue are death and rape.
Small Remedies, is Shashi Deshpande’s most recent novel, works at different levels the personal, the worldly, women’s rights, communal violence, motherhood etc. It vacillates between the present and the past, delving into the lives of Savitri bai, Leela, Munni, and the narrator Madhu herself. It is structured as a biography within a biography, with the writer, Madhu, often in a dilemma about how to tell her story. She wonders if a biography is an exercise in truth telling, and if it is, whose version must it be?

In all her novels, Deshpande seeks to faithfully reflect life as it almost is without resorting to any personal commentary and explanation. Her novels, dealing as they do with women’s oppression, are highly susceptible to feminist harangue. But, it is a rare achievement that she has not fallen a Prey to this temptation.

It must be observed that out of various techniques employed for developing and highlighting various facts of her female characters, Deshpande makes only a sparing use of irony, satire or even humour. Flashes of irony are evident in one or two incidents-in a couple of novels but they do not seem to be included intentionally by the writer. The most obvious example which comes to mind is the scene in That Silence where Mohan, Jaya’s husband accuses her of avoiding him during the crucial Period when they are in hiding because of the fear of corruption charges being leveled at him. It is
during this period that Jaya herself is facing a traumatic time and needs support. Her husband's accusation, therefore, seems highly ironical and throws her off balance for sometime.

Another example of Deshpande's attempt at irony is her creation of the character, Priti, in The Binding Vine. Priti who at best can be called a Pseudo-feminist Provides a foil to the ever serious Urmi. Urmi's compassion for her long dead mother-in-Law, Mira makes her want to set Mira's random writings to order and publish them. But Priti is more interested in the sensation which Mira's story is likely to create and Plans to adapt her life into a film. Her reaction to Kalpana's tragedy also borders on hypocrisy because she is more concerned about the publicity which the case in sure to generate.

The use of myth is also recognized as an important Literacy device to enhance the artistic effect of the novel. While English Poets and writers have relied heavily on Christian, Pagan and classical myths, Indian writers in English have derived inspiration from the wealth of material available in the form of stories from the Ramayan, the Mahabharata and the Puranas and also local legends and folk-lore. The most often used symbol from Indian mythology, of course, it Sita, Who is considered to be the ideal woman-patient and submissive. Many other parallels are also drawn liberally from Indian mythology by Indian writers in English and other languages.
In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Deshpande draws a parallel from the Dhruva story to highlight the sense of neglect experienced by Saru, whose parents show a blatant preference for her brother, Dhruva. Saru's father also tells her how on her death bed her mother and made him respect the episode of Duryodhana's hiding the lake at the end of the battle, waiting for the pandavas to come and kill him. Saru identifies herself and her mother as Duryodhana figures, both lonely, unloved, defeated and filled with a sense of rejection.

In *That Long Silence*, Jaya recollects the fable of the foolish crow and the wise sparrow which she had often heard as a child. She does not repeat the story to her children because of the gear that they might store it is this subconscious and eventually turn out to be like "that damnably, insufferably, priggish sparrow larking after their homes, their babies-and to hell with the world. Story home, look after your babies, keep out the rest of the world, and you're safe." (17). Deshpande hints at the way in which the seemingly harmless bedtime stories influence children at a tender age to believe that a woman's job at all times in to protect her family even if she has to resort to treachery or deceit. In *That Long Silence*-Jaya also recalls the pativratas Sita, Savitri and Draupadi, mythical symbols of ideal wife hood ironically comparing herself to them." Sita Following her husband into exile, Savitri dogging death to declaim he husband, Draupadi stoically sharing her husband travails"
(11). She feels that she has unconsciously emulated their example by following her husband into lading where he is faced with the threat of corruptive changes. There are a few mythical allusions in Deshpande's novels but she does not believe that myth is used as a literary device.

Narrative techniques of out, the most obvious challenge for the Indian writes is English in the use of the English language in a way that will be distinctively Indian, and yet remain English. Though Indian writing in English has come to story, the propriety of Indian writes using English is still deputed up on. Raju raw in his 'Preface' to Kanthapura declares. "we cannot write like the English we should not." The Problem of the Indian English about people who do not normally speak or think in English. In order to over come this Problem, novelists have made different experiments with language. One of the most challenging tasks before the Indian English novelist is to write in the English Language in a manner that conveys the essence of the Indian Socio-cultural ethos without distorting the language. It is singularly difficult feat to achieve, especially if one considers the vast differences between the Indian and the English cultures, and the problems that these difference might pose to the writer. Yet it has not inhibited Shashi Deshpande from using English as the medium of her fiction.
Literal translation has been most consciously tried by Mulk Raj Anand who has no inhibitions of taking Liberties with the English language inspite of the disapproval of reviewers and critics. Meenakshi Mukherjee in her book, The Twice-Born Fiction has made a list of some of the Punjabi and Hindi idioms used by Anand in his works, some of which may sound atrocious to those not familiar with either of these Languages. For example, ‘eating the air’ (to take a stroll) ’ breaking the vessel’ (to expose a secret), and ‘ black in the pulse’ (something wrong) Anands works are so Liberally sprinkled with Swear words and words of abuse, which of course are not out of Place in stories mostly about the Punjab peasantry.

Khushwant Singh also translates many Punjabi phrases and proverbs into English, Bhabani Bhattacharya’s novels are full of Literal translations of Bengali Proverbs, while Raja Rao’s novels are full of translations of Kannada Sayings. R.K. Narayan, Perhaps, is the only one among the older generation who did not feel the need to use either any Indian translations of words and phrases nor original English text book Phrases. Among the later novelists, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal and Kamala Markandaya have managed to use the English language without distorting it with unseemly translations of words and phrases or coining of new compounds words like ‘that-house-people’ or ‘next house- women’s kitchen’. Shashi Deshpande belongs to the new breed
to English writers who suffer from no complexes about using English because most of them do not even consider it a foreign language.

Deshpande's mind is ever alert to the issues, related to contemporary society, and she has evolved literacy skill in a manner which enables her to present these issues realistically, and some times with the help of motifs and metaphors. The motif of enclosure and confinement recurs in Shashi Deshpande's novels as well as short stories. It is employed, both to signify the lack of freedom and the circumscribed existence of the middle class woman as well as to reflect the alienation and loneliness that after sets into a marriage. In Roots and Shadows. Indu in the mist of a dissatisfactory martial relationship dreams that she is trapped in a subterranean place without an exit (10). Jaya caught in a similar situation, in That Long Silence, also has a dream in which she finds herself:

"[W] alking between rows of houses, so close to one another that there is a sense of claustrophobia." (52).

In The Dark Holds No Terrors, Sarita at the height of her conflict with Manu, is seen doodling "one circle entwined in another" (22). The circles one again signify restricted space with no way out, Pointing to the cul-de-sac situation of Sarita's marriage. In The Binding Vine, Urmila dreams she is trying to get out of bed but finds her hands enmeshed in a
mosquito net; she feels “trapped” (195). The short stories, "The Inner Rooms" and At The End of The Tether.” also employ the metaphor of confinement to indicate the lack of freedom and choice before the woman is a patriarchy.

While Deshpande’s short stories follow a conventional linear narrative structure, often in the first persons narrative, her novels have more complicated structures. They have digressive patterns, with the present juxtaposed with flash blacks from the past. In the case of The Dark Holds No Terrors, the narrative follows the alternating pattern of the third person narrative and the first person narrative. Roots and Shadows, That Long Silence and The Binding Vine are first person narratives, with the Protagonist returning to the past to find solutions to her present problems. The past and the present are thus strongly bound to each other. The Protagonist seems to be Progressing from a given state of mind to a more positive state as the narrative proceeds. Most of the Indian novels that deal with woman’s issues offer a peripheral treatment of the subject or end up glorifying virtues of Indian woman, like patience devotion and object acceptance of whatever is meeted out to her The Dark Holds No Terrors by Shashi Deshpande is a totally different novel in the sense that it explodes the myth of man’s unquestionable superiority and the myth of woman being a martyr and a paragon of all virtues. It is based on the problems faced by a career woman, a refreshingly new phenomenon in the Indian English fiction.
It is ironic that the father whom Saru had always considered “a negative man, incapable of strong feelings” and who had “always avoided things” The Truth facts life confrontation” (180), is the one which ultimately urges her to confront facts. The novel’s ending with Saru setting out to attend to a Patient indicated the assertion of her carrier. There can be no compromise about it.

The Dark Holds No Terrors ambivalently projects deconstruction as well as reconstruction of gender roles as the female Protagonist of the novel is Constantly and often unconsciously, in search of an “inner space” “Which is instrumental in the reconstructive of gender identity in the wake of its being deconstructed. Central to the novel is the motif of home aspect of female gender construction.

The novels projects the post – modern dilemma of a woman who strongly resents the onslaught on her individuality and identity. The antagonism is faced mainly from two persons –Saru’s mother and Manohar, Saru’s husband. Both of them represent the values and norms established by a patriarchal society Ironically, a female can be made an agency for the effective promotion of a made point of view as in the case of Saru’s mother. The mother –daughter relationship is marked with mutual hatred. The mother is the arch-rival in the filial power – structure. If Saru is attacked on the plane of filial relationship, she is also offended by the mother time and again. She defies her mother and marries of
her own choice and leaves home. The rejection of home and family at this juncture in the novel is Saru's first step forward towards independence. She leaves the 'inner space' the home. The novel may be viewed as Saru's journey into inner space one after the other. From the first 'inner space' Saru moves to another by marrying Manohar and raising a family and having a home. And once again the home disappoints her. The very economic independence, on the strength of which she had become independent, now becomes her bane. Once again Saru defies this time her husband. She leaves home the second time moves out of the inner space again. From this inner space Saru moves to another 'inner space', i.e. her father's home. At the end of the novel, however, by implications she goes back to her home in Bombay.

Saru's travel into an 'inner space' then defying the inner space and once again journeying back up to it may be explained from biological, psychological and social angles. And in all these angels the concept of the 'inner space' works. According to Erik H. Erikson, "marriage is an integration of two individual dispositions to bring up the next" generation. Female identity is formed/influenced by the inner-space destined to bear the off spring of the chosen man. " This is the core issue with which the difference between male and female becomes" Plarized with a finality. It facilitates the progression and procreation of human race.
Therefore, there is an intuitive response to turn to an 'inner space' which is analogous to the womb. Women and men with their different biological programming react to a situation in their peculiar ways. Although Saru goes out a number of times, she comes back home the equal number of times. This turning to the 'inner space' is conditioned by her female biology as there is an inner bodily space with productive potentials. It is felt keenly accepting as well as rejecting it, as puberty and pregnancy are reacted against but they are also accepted when children come.

Erikson (1983) discusses the Psychologist's play data where children were given play constructs to construct a scene. These constructs were studied comparatively. Sex difference was obvious in spatial configurations. Girls and boys used space differently and certain configurations were typical of girls and boys. The girls emphasized inner and boys outer space. The typical features of girls scene was the interior of a house representing either a configuration with furniture without boundary or a simple enclosure with people and animals within. The enclosure is marked by low boundary walls and a peaceful ambience. Boy's structures were generally exterior scenes; People and animals were often outside and moving. If the play data is studied from a psychological point of view this results in boy's and girls' preoccupation with outer and inner space respectively. Biological and psychological unity results in typical male and female attitudes and
reactions. Sam's search for a home may be viewed from this point of view.

A purely social interpretation of the concepts of 'inner space' may deny anything symbolic or somatic in the play constructs. An interesting account of the morphology of basic baboon organization is given by Erikson. The female baboons are kept in the inner space surrounded by the protective wall of baboons as a safety against any external danger. There are concentric circles and each one is performing its assigned task. The strength and weakness of a gender depends on its functional fitness in a social frame worth depending on division of labour, we have not yet reached a point progress where a working woman's responsibility at home is reduced to nil. There is a duality of duties to be performed inside as well as outside and her Primary. Duty is at home-inside the house. There may be blurring of the boundary of duties but there are two clear vantage points upheld by the male and the female which are biologically. Psychologically, socially and culturally ordained. If a woman transgresses in the order area, she has to come back to the assigned place. Although male and female features co-exist in a person, women generally have a predominantly sensitive indwelling which determines their behavior. When a woman moves not into the outer space, as for economic independence in the case of Saru, it is in manner which may hermaphroditic, if not totally masculine. The above analysis
attempts of offer a total configurationally approach to answer the first question regarding Saru's going into an 'inner space' again and again.

This takes us to another question. If it is natural for a woman to be in the inner space under male-female polarity, then why does Saru move out of it? The root cause may lie in the protagonist inflated ego and a cold attitude towards the members of her family, which is the very negation of the stereotyped suffering Indian woman. The very fact that Saru moves out shows the emergence of the new woman who has stood publicity for what when upheld privately. Saru as an individual is convincing in her conflict between the inner and outer spaces. The walls which surround her are negative walls which do not offer any peace or protection. Therefore the 'inner space' which she abandons does not fulfill her intuitive demands, and hence this quest for a home. She goes out not merely for rejecting home but on the contrary for seeking one. Therefore, exit form an inner space may appear to be deconstruction of her gender role, but inherent is the desire for reconstructing it.

Saru presents the process of forming a gender identity. In her exit she makes a distraction complete with the final going to the 'inner space' is also a reminder of the state of affairs in the present social set up—that in a patriarchal society man grants emancipation to woman according to the parameters fixed by him for her. The male-female priority is kept up and a
merger is not encouraged. Sam is a study in conflict. She goes out to deconstruct the socially imposed gender roles framed by a patriarchal society but comes back in to reconstruct her intuitive role(s).

Shashi Deshpande thus writes her novels from the female point of view. Traditionally, the Indian women has been represented as a spineless, wounded creature, subjected to male domination. Deshpande is a feminist par excellence. Her uniqueness is that her protagonists are not rebels but they learn in the course of their encounter with the harsh realities of life to generate in themselves the power to cope with the male-orientation. A variety of shades of women's mind and plight is reflected through her writings. She has employed various literary devices like metaphors for presenting the fluctuating moods and emotions of the New women. The metaphor of 'dark' and 'terror' has been effectively used in The Dark Holds No Terrors. Similarly in That Long Silence and A Matter Of Time, Deshpande has subtly and effectively described the 'silence' which has been trusted on Indian women for centuries. It is ultimately the female protagonist Jaya who decides to speak up and erase the long silence between her and her husband. Her female characters are not in the self of Sita or Savitri, but Maitrey. Though Deshpande being a women writer, her works have given an in depth view of "the vulnerability" of women. Like
Indu of *Roots And Shadows*, Deshpande seems to. She is not only a technical innovator but her use of language is fresh and characteristically precise.

Deshpande learnt the secrets of craftsmanship asiduously. As a mature writer, she has been conscious of the accuracy of language and as Lakshmi Holmstrom:

"I learnt about language. Craftsmanship is so important in writing and you only learnt it by doing it. And the short story was the perfect form to learn from, because one had to be brief. One had to be careful. And that training is still with me. I am very careful about not using any extra words. I was also very conscious that I didn't want to make melodramatic or overt statements ever. That's how I learnt a kind of subtlety of approach. Not that I wanted to be subtle for the sake of being subtle, but because I didn't want to overplay anything."

Deshpande's writing once again proves the fact that her art lies in concealing art. The highly functional language with telling economy that she uses is an important assets of her as a fiction writer.

In her modesty, Deshpande thinks of herself as "an ordinary women who writes sitting at home". She is honestly concerned with expressing herself in English as clearly and effectively as possible. Asked whether she 'thinks' in English while writing her fiction, she told Carvalho: "when I write narrative, I think in English, When I write dialogue I think in Kannada or Marathi, which are my languages". Justifying this kind of code switching, she added; "In our middle class families, most of us converse in English but automatically switch over to our mother tongue when we speak to our elders,"
relatives and so on”. At places, the dialogue in her novels reads like translation from Kannada, Marathi or Hindi, but her narrative is generally free from Indian coinages. "I do not use Indianisms to make my writing look Indian", she said, "I never try to make India look exotic either".

Deshpande writes in English because she finds it the most convenient mode of self-expression. Moreover she did not have a choice in the matter, "I never did study Marathi or Kannada and even more importantly I haven't actually used these languages as working tools". She is nevertheless aware of handicaps of doing creative writing in a language other than one's mother tongue. Writing in English makes even Deshpande somewhat "inhibited". She frankly admits: "I lose the range of nuances which are available in Marathi for example, the richness of the phrases that make up that language. So I lose out on that, but I gain in other ways because English has its own special qualities too and then "one has to work for a little harder when one writes in English". While revising her manuscripts Deshpande has to look "particularly closely at the language". What is still worse is that writing in English "alienates you from the main stream". It is for this reason that Deshpande would like to be regarded at par with writers in regional languages without being "non Indian" in any way. Her English is deeply rooted in her background:
I am different from other Indians who write in English, my background is very firmly there, I was never educated abroad. My novels don't have any westerners, for example. They are just about Indian people and the complexities of our lives. Our inner lives and our other lives and the reconciliation between them. My English is as we use it. I don't make it easier for anyone really. I don't make any changes, it's because I think the novel needs it, not because the reader needs it.

Despite all constraints, Deshpande is capable of using the English language felicitously. English she says, cannot be called a foreign language at all because "it is so much used in India."

Technique is an important aspect of creative writing. Deshpande concedes choices to a fiction writer in technical matters: "There are some, may be several, choices in the technique: in the way you 'tell' the story. But once the choice has been made the artist has to be faithful to and meticulous about it. About her travail in developing the right technique for herself, Deshpande told Holmstrom:

"Technique is something which I have to worry a lot about. I have to work at it and think about it and it takes me a long time to hit upon it exactly. It's like setting the tanpura. Before a concert beings. The orchestra goes on strumming, tuning up, while you wonder what it's all about. Suddenly you know that this is exactly right for your need. But you know at the beginning that this is the way. The beginning is much more fumbling, blundering and very chaotic. There's always too much."

We may find in some of Deshpande's novels occasionally autobiographical strains, but her characters and
incidents are not directly related from her own life. What the novelist does is to make creative use of her experiences and memories in her works. This is particularly true of her early writings. In an interview, Deshpande quotes DOM Moraes approvingly who says: "Most of what a creative writer writes is his autobiography; if not of his life, of his thoughts. All ones life doesn't go into one's writing and all one's writing doesn't consist of just one's life".

The novelist does not always give her thoughts to the first person narrator. She told an interviewer about The Binding Vine that ".......it isn't the first person narrator who has my closest sympathy. It is someone else in the novel". The autobiographical flashes impart human interest and credibility to her works.

Through her portrayal of the Indian middle-class woman's existence in Indian, Deshpande not only presents a feminist insight into patriarchal values, but also prescribes a balance between tradition and modernity as a working philosophy for the contemporary woman. By tradition she means those value of security and harmony symbolize the Indian way of life, while modernity essentially refers to the assertion of the independent, individual self. At the same time, she need not repudiate her marriage or family.

Deshpande compares her protagonists with women from an earlier generation as well as with women from the lower classes in her novels. Through her representations of these
women, she suggests women, although within the freedom and choice of the Protagonists, are strong women destined to better their lives. The protagonists learn from these minor characters that it is they who have to make life possible by standing up from themselves and resisting oppression. By portraying the minor characters and the protagonists together, Deshpande seems to be suggesting reworking of the Indian idea of womanhood which both recognizes the reality of Indian society and repudiates stereotypes about women.
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