CHAPTER -V

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Marriage is a union of true minds and two loving souls and well coupled, well-expressed in the society as man and woman. But in the present scenario man and woman have become two opposite forces as a female and a male. Jane Austen a (pavilish) novelist emphasises than "any single with a good fortune must be in want of wife" while Shashi Deshpande treats a marriage as 'a trap' or 'a cage' a for wife while her husband is no "sheltering tree" for her which questions her identity and freedom. The present chapter is devoted to explore to problems of marriage which leads to "self-surrender" and 'self-denial to Indian woman.

Marriage is an important thing in the life of a woman. The importance that our society attaches to marriage is reflected in our literature and it is the central concern of Shashi Deshpande's novels. Simone De Beauvoir's well-known statement that one is not born but rather becomes a woman, is enacted in our society where the girl learns early that she is Paraya Dhan (another's property), and
she is her parent's responsibility till the day she is handed over to her rightful owners. What a girl makes of her life, how she shapes herself as an individual, what profession she takes up is not as important as who she marries. Marriage is the ultimate goal of a woman's life.

Though marriage is important both for men and women, woman is not enjoying the same freedom as her male counterpart. Even if the woman chooses her own husband, she is labelled a rebel not only by the family but also by the society. So the society as a whole is to be blamed for usurping the freedom of woman regarding marriage.

The present chapter attempts to probe into the problems of marriage through Indu the protagonist and her cousin Mini where one enjoys the freedom of marriage and the other accepts the traditional marriage.

The novel Roots and shadows begins with the marriage of Mini, Indu cousin, which is performed in the traditional way in their ancestral home after a long gap of eleven years as she had left home to marry the person of
her own choice against the wishes of the whole family especially the old matriarch Akka.

Shashi Deshpande, in the present novel, highlights the problems of marriage faced by middle-class people in finding suitable grooms for their daughters. This problem is well illustrated through the character of Padmini. Since a girl's mind over since her childhood is tuned that she is a Paraya Dhan, she tries to attach a lot of importance to it. Mini, brought up in a traditional way, does not like to remain a burden on her parents and prefers to go to her husband's house. It is indeed a tragedy that even in the modern age, Indian females echo the same sentiment where it was marriage which mattered most to them but not to the men. It is a beginning of females sacrifices in life that marriage brings to hers.

Men and women are two halves of the same species, and they should fit together like two sides of a coin. Yet, throughout history, the sexes have regarded each other less as fellow human being and more as aliens— to be loved, feared or confined. In the relationship between the sexes, women have been forced to occupy a secondary place, not
imposed by their inherent deficient characteristic but rather by strong cultural forces and social tradition. This has resulted in the failure of women to occupy a place of human dignity as free and independent beings. They find themselves as living in a world where men condemn them to "immanence" and their existence is justified only as subjects of sex...."absolute sex, no less".1

They are defined as Semone De Beauvoir writes:

"With reference to man and not he with reference to her, she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute-- she is the other".

Theological statements emphasized the subordinate position of females as willed by heaven. Woman was accused of the original sin and of being the root of all evils. She was considered impure and sullied, contaminating all and opening the gates of hell. This derogatory opinion was further reinforced when serious philosophical debate arose as to whether woman was a complete human being possessed of a soul, or merely a breeder for the superior
race of men. Describing the traditional norms of Indian society, Dube Writes:

"According to the traditional norms of the society a husband is expected to be authoritarian figure whose will should always dominate the domestic scene. The wife should regard him as her 'master' and should 'serve him faithfully.' The husband 'is superior,' the wife is his 'subordinate.'

Srinivas, while discussing traditional Hindu wife's roles, writes:

"The sacred and secular writings of Hindus have many more allusions to a wife's role was more definite and precise than that of the husband. Thus she had more to adhere to a set pattern laid down for her than the husband had to do."

The history of patriarchy reveals varieties of cruelties and barbarities leveled at women. They were forced to live in a crippling state of utter humiliation and objection-bought, soled, roped, beaten, tortured and finally murdered. They were always the oppressed class dominated through male self-interest, prevented from development as human being by the system which
prostituted them in and out of marriage. After marriage, the women became the mirror of sub-average intelligence in the eyes of the law. Her legal existence was suspended, or at least incorporated and consolidated into the hands of the husband. She could not dispose of the money earned, hold property, have a say in the upbringing of the children, sue her husband or hold him to an argument. Her husband could be an adulterer, or a sodomite, or stained with every crime, yet he was still her husband and she could not leave him, get a divorce or remarry. While the man could divorce, kill his wife and still be freed from punishment. For the male dictum was:

"My wife and I are one and I am he"\(^{5}\)

The wife was no more than a chattel, a slave who had to suffer the aggravated assaults committed by the husband. As Simone De Beauvoir says:

"Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society.

Marriage has always been very different thing for man and woman.
Boys get married, they take a wife. They look in marriage for an enlargement, a confirmation of their existence, but not the mere right to exist, it is a charge. They assume voluntarily.............

In marrying, woman gets some shame in the world as her own; legal guarantees protect her against capricious action by man, but she becomes his vassal. He is the economic head of the joint enterprise and hence he represents it in the view of society. She takes his name; she belongs to his religion, his class, his circle; she joins his family, she becomes his "half".

Men were strict and women were weighed down by the operation of the double standard and neurotic sexual ideology, which punished with social ostracism any woman who breached the sexual taboo, but blindly ignored male offences. Women were typed to a mere biological existence and the path to their intellectual and economic upliftment was closed.

The movement of awakening came in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when women became aware of their imprisonment and it came as a need to break away
from the suffocating male ideology. The bomb of discontentment which had been simmering for quite sometime exploded with a loud blast and shook the foundation of the patriarchal citadel. Women waged a whole-sale war against the male-oriented society and the organized suffrage committees won a few battles. They won the local franchise and to some extent carved out equal opportunities in the field of education and employment. But concessions were slow in coming. Discriminations in hundred different ways continued. Women's confinement to the home and private life went unquestioned.

The ageing and abating woman's movement was revived and revitalized in the nineteen sixties. The intensity of women's activism for liberation grew at an extraordinary rate. Development of consciousness transformed the movement from elite lobby to a mass movement. Their politics was one of total involvement and a commitment to changing through direct participation all inequitable social realities. Feminists -re- examined the concept of womanhood and challenged the existing
patriarchal ideology. They condemned pre-marital chastity, marriage and romantic love. They strove for liberation from sex roles and the traditional ways of defining gender identity. Philips Snowden says:

"The feminist asks for freedom in the exercise of those gifts, and in the use of those qualities of soul and mind, which are apart from the consequences of the sex-act. She objects to the pressing down of women's personality into one channel, the directing of women's emotion, with its specially rich quality, to one end, the confinement of woman's genius to one achievement" 7

He further added that the feminist movement was to:

"The recognition, full and complete, of the humanity of women" 8

Steady growth of women's emancipation, political and cultural uncertainties discredited the traditional image of women being an evil force or an inferior being. The old ideals of woman as passive, dependent and chaste were gradually transformed. A more human and egalitarian
image of woman, with rights and duties, legitimate sexual passion and an independent existence emerged.

Describing the traditional Indian women, Radha Krishnan writes:

"Centuries of tradition" have made the Indian women the most unselfish, the most-self-denying and most patient women in the world, whose pride is suffering.9

It is this pride which sustained marital harmony or at least did not allow marital adjustment to become a problem. According to Ross, a few of the binding elements in the relationship of husband and wife were "a clear cut division of labour between them, each having an essential role to play in the household; and the expected subordinate position of the wife which eliminated much conflict and tension".10

The processes of industrialization, urbanization, and secularization have brought about socio-psychological changes in the attitudes and values of the people of this country, especially among the urban population. The attitudes of educated women have considerably changed, particularly with regard to marriage and their own status,
a deep and vital change has taken place in the economic condition and personal status of women. Desai writes:

"More and more women consider self-respect and the development of personality as necessary goals of life. The two old pillars of the Hindu society viz. sacramental marriage and joint family are weakening".

A large majority of working women desired to have a relation of co-partnership with their husbands. They expected a lot of happiness in their married life and demanded more personal gratification of their emotional, physiological, social and economic needs out of their marriage.

They put more emphasis on their privileges than on their obligations. This indicates a definite and vital change in their attitude towards marriage and marital relationship.

The married working women are required to play a dual role, one as wives, mothers, and housewives and the other, as employees. Being subjected to the dual demands of home and work, they are liable to face a crisis of adjustment. In addition to the biological functions that
they have to perform because of their sex and the culturally defined woman's roles in which they have to act, they are confronted, at the same time, with the responsibilities and duties connected with their employment. The patterns of families with working wife and the functions of their different members are liable to be greatly affected by the fact of wife's gainful employment outside home.

The tradition-oriented Indian society has experienced various changes in the last six or seven decades. One of the most fundamental and far reaching social changes brought about after India's Independence has been the emancipation of women from their traditional-ridden ethos, which has resulted in the entering of women of the middle and upper classes into remunerative vacations that were largely the preserves of men.

The socio-economic emancipation of women in India has brought in its chain of changes in their status and outlook. The widely affected area of this change has been the vital relationship between man and woman. The concepts of love, marriage, and sex have undergone a lot of
changes, woman, who was dissatisfied with the inhibiting cultural and sexual roles assigned to her from the unconscious down of the patriarchal India, is now gaining strength to rebel against the cultural social oppression. But at the same time, she fails to reject totally her social and cultural background. Therefore, she stands between tradition and modernity.

Shashi Deshpande in all her novels has dealt with the conflicting position of females. Specially she has concentrated on the theme of meaninglessness and sexual confusion suffered by women in tradition-oriented institutions. The reality of modern Indian Woman is that even to the basic needs of life like love, marriage and sex, she is in a state of Uttar confusion coming out of home she has seen and experienced the world on her own and therefore has developed different attitudes towards this aspect of life. These attitudes sometimes reject the traditional and sometimes rebel against them. That is why she feels a kind of imbalance between the traditional expectations and her new sexual demands. In this process she suffers, questions and looks for answers. In most
Indian women novelists, however, we do not find complete answers. Shashi Deshpande is capable of giving complete answers. She not only shows the path but the right path which is necessary to live a happy life, for modern, emancipated, educated and intelligent middle-class working women.

As a good story-tellers, Shashi Deshpande presents the predicaments of women with their concerns, problems and perils of those of their sex. Anita Desai is also a conscious novelist like Shashi Deshpande. Who has depicted the problems of love and sex in her novels. In If I Die Today, Deshpande has depicted the problems of love and sex after marriage. What they have been, what they have become, and what is in store for them. On the surface, all is all with her middle-class women. They have a relatively happy married life with their not so badly placed husbands and are blessed with children in most cases. Yet there is some thing rotten in the world of their domestic and married life:

The real problem, however, does not lie in womanhood, wifehood or motherhood but in the attitude of
the middle-class male which deprivileges the woman against the man the moment. She becomes a wife Manju avers:

"A marriage. You start off expecting so many things. And bit by bit, like dead leaves, the expectations fall off. But........... two people who have shut themselves off in two separate glass jar? Who can see each other but can't communication? Is this a marriage" (p.22)

The marriage is almost on the verge of wreckage and "It's the Indian male" who emerges as the villain and the forth burden on the Indian woman. Marriage is an important event in the life of a woman. The importance that our society attaches to marriage is reflected in our literature and it is the central concern of Shashi Deshpande's novels. Simone De Beauvoir's well-known statement that one is not born but rather becomes a woman. Since the birth of female, she travels on the road of unknown home.

The women protagonists in Deshpande's novels achieve "person hood", Yet do not negate the family or the society. They go beyond what Elaine show Walter calls the
"Female phase" which is "a phase of self-discovery, a turning inward freed from the dependence of opposition, a search for identity"\(^{13}\)

"She further adds, They, no doubt, discover themselves but the quest does not end there. It could be observed that they are not feminists of the first stage but of the second and the second stage can not be viewed in terms of women alone but also in terms of the separate personhood or equality with men. The second stage involves coming to new terms with the family, new terms with love and work"\(^{14}\)

It is a kind of enlightened reintegration into the society where they find own voices, no longer being "other directed"

"Marriage subjugates and enslaves woman. It leads her to "aimless days indefinitely repeated, life that slips away gently towards death without questioning its purpose"\(^{15}\)

Women pay for their happiness at the cast of their freedom. Such a sacrifice on the part of a woman is too high, for the kind of self contentment and security that
marriage offers a woman drains her soul of its capacity for greatness that Simone De Beauvoir has put up:

"She shuts behind her the doors of her new home. When she was a girl, the whole countryside was her homeland; the forests were hers. Now she is confined to a restricted space............" (p. 25)

Roots and Shadows is the story of Indu, a middle class young girl, brought up in an orthodox brahmin family headed by Akka (the mother surrogate in the novel). The novel begins with the heroine's return to her ancestral house. The parental home initiates her into an understanding of the meaning of human life. It is here that she discovers what her shadows are—-as an independent woman and a writer, and what her shadows are daughter, a mother and commercial writer. She rebels against Akka, her conventional world, her rigid values and marries Jayant. Ironically, she realizes the futility of her decisions.

"Jayant and I.................I wish I could say we have achieved complete happiness. But I cannot fantasize"17

In order to attain freedom, she seeks marriage as an alternative to the bondage inevitable in the parental family.
She looks forward to the role of a wife with the hope that casting herself in a new role which will help her in winning for freedom. Her baffled longing to achieve a complete persons hood is explicity suggested:

"This is my real sorrow that I can never be complete in myself. Untill I had met Jayant, I had not known it......I met Jayant and lost the ability to be alone"18

A married woman like Indu is left with practically no choice except what her husband wills and desires. She cannot unburden herself, and her feminine instinct is curbed and suppressed. Despite all these, she is reluctant to admit failure and drags on with her marital life, which only imprisons her true self. She confesses to Naren:

"As a woman I felt hedged in by my sex. I resented my womanhood because it closed so many doors to me"(p.87)

A woman's relationship with others, requires to withdraw her from her own sense of identity. Indu feels as if she has become so fluid that she has no tangible shape, no form of her own. It is Indu minus the 'I', which renders her an ideal woman-"a woman who sheds her 'I' who loses her identity in her husband 's" (p. 49), a woman who bears
everything without a drop of tear. Marriage has reduced her to a state of "total surrender" (p.52). Through Indu, the novelist voices her own views on marriage and calls it "a trap".

"It's a trap............ that's what marriages. A trap, a cage?........ a cage with two trapped animals glaring hatred at each other........isn't so wrong after all. And it's not joke, but a tragedy. But what animal would cage itself?" (p.59).

Marriage becomes the last resort of happiness love and sex in a traditional society which restricts the movement of female towards a perception of herself as an independent human being. She arrives at a realistic understanding of love and sex as a physical instinct. :

"Love, that's a word I don't really understand. It seems to an over worked word". She realizes "The sexual instinct........That is true. The material instinct That is true too. Self interest, self love........They are the basic truth : ( Roots and Shadows ) (p. 93).

Indu experiences disillusionment in sex and suffers a silent sexual humiliation. She suffers no guilt in her extra
marital relationship with Naren and decides not to tell Jayant about it: "That has nothing to do with the two of us and our life together" (P-205). The novel gains its feminist stance in this assertion of Indu, of her autonomy and her awareness which accentuates that she exists as a person but not a dependent on Jayant. Men are not able to destroy the picture of the submissive woman out of their minds and women are silently accepting the submissive role without trying to voice out their thoughts and feelings.

Though Indian woman is educated, employed and economically independent but financial freedom alone is not enough, Family, marriage and social norms bind her completely and there is something that provokes conflict in her mind and makes her restless. Simon De Beavoir, therefore, writes:

"Marriage is not the same thing to a man as to a woman. The two sexes are necessary to each other............ A man is socially an independent and complete individual; he is regarded first of all as a producer whose existence is justified by the work he does for the group; we have seen
why it is that the reproductive and domestic role to which woman is confined has not guaranteed her an equal dignity" 19.

A woman like Indu, who is independent, is allowed no direct influence upon her husband. She has to reach out beyond herself towards the social milieu only through her husband. But the husband instead of becoming a source of freedom, unlike her ancestral home Which was tradition-bounds, becomes a barrier for Indu's development as an individual. He is unconcerned and indifferent to her emotional urges.

Indus tries to articulate her feminine voice through her creative writing in which she is interested but her interests are curtailed by her so called broad-minded husband, because they need money and Jayant betrays her hopes for harmony and integration, for peace and happiness. He is not even a 'sheltering tree' to her. Instead she finds that she has relinquished her identity by surrendering before Jayant's masculinity by becoming his wife. Willingly she yields to the demands of marriage and moulds herself up to the dictates of her husband and she
thinks of her own sense of identity. Indu experiences as if she has become so fluid that she has no tangible shape, no form of her own. As a woman of free thinking, Indu realises the futility of such a hypothetical life.

The meek, docile and humble Indu of the early days finally emerges as a bold, challenging, conscious and rebellious woman. She resigns her job by challenging the male authority, hierarchy and that of the irony of a woman's masked existence. She comes out of her emotional upheaval and decides to lead a meaningful life with her husband. The home she had discarded becomes a place of refuge, of solace and consolation. It is Akka's house which offers her ample opportunities to know herself. It is here that she is able to discover her roots as an independent woman, a daughter, a mother and a commercial writer. She begins to see life in a new light. "Yes, the house had been a trap too, binding me to a past I had to move away from. Now, I felt clear, as if I had cut away all the unnecessary uneven edges of me." (p. 204)
In an interview, Geetha Gangadharan asked Shashi Deshpande if she was giving a message of freedom within the circle. She replied:

"No" I am not giving any message to anyone. It is how they take it. Of course, some of these are very introspective things............. But certainly, some of my thoughts are always there. They are there for the reader to pick and choose. As far as the questions goes, all that I can say is. "This is what I, as an individual, believe in". 

Thus Indu's uncompromising and paradoxical feminine self, that frantically longed for self-expression, finally finds its roots in the home and with her husband. Indu has confronted her real self and she knows her roots. She is capable of taking decisions not only for herself but for others too, and life does not come to an end with individuals whether it is Indu of Jayant. Thus as Parvati Bhatnagar puts it,

"In the end comes the realization that freedom lies in having the courage to do what one believes is the right thing to do and the determination and the tenacity to adhere to it. That alone can bring harmony in life."
Indu lives to see life with the possibilities of growth. She has discovered the meaning of life in her journey to individualization.

In another novel of Shashi Deshpande—That Long Silence, which won Shashi Deshpande the Sahitya Akademi Award for 1990, tells the story of an Indian housewife, who maintains silence throughout her life. The novel ends with her resolve to speak, to break her long silence. The allusion in the novel's title is to a British feminist manifesto quoted in the epigraph (American actress Elizabeth Robin's speech to WWSL in 1907):

"If I were a man and cared to know the world I lived in I almost think it would make me a shade uneasy. The weight of that Long Silence of one half of the world".

Against this backdrop, the novel is a protest against the limitation of women's lives. The force of Deshpande's indictment of women's lives lies in the way she is able to show their condition as endemic, chiefly by drawing similarities among Jaya and variety of other female, in generations of women in her family (Jaya, her mother, her grand father); among different classes of women of the
same class and generation (Jaya, her cousin Kusum, her
widowed neighbour Mukta), who have all been trained in
silence.

That Long Silence could be read as crystallization of
memory and catharsis. It is an autobiographical narrative
of Jaya. Her husband, Mohan, suspected of her business
malpractice than has taken with her in a small suburban
flat in Bombay. Such limbo of waiting allows Jaya to reflect
her own life that demands her protean roles— daughter,
sister, wife, mother, daughter-in-law, friend, mistress and
writer of genteel "feminine" newspaper pieces. Despite her
marriage to Mohan and subsequently becoming a mother
of two children, she become a lonely figure. Her husband
could not understand her feelings as a result of which she
was torn within. She describes her marriage as:-

"A pair of bullocks Yoked together ..........a clever
phrase, but can it substitute for the reality? Aman and a
Woman married for seventeen years. A couple with two
children. A family some what like the one caught and
preserved for posterity by the advertising visuals I so loved."
But the reality was only this. We were two persons. A man. A Woman"22

This estrangement between Jaya and her husband reminds us one of Anita Desai’s Cry the Peacock where we can feel an ever widening gap between Maya and her husband throughout the novel. Their married life is punctuated all along by "matrimonial silence"23 Jaya was deeply distressed to know that the writer in her could not come to light because of her husband. She says:

"I had know then that it hadn't mattered to Mohan that I had written a good story" When she writes a true story, her husband protests":

Jaya how could you, how could you have done it? They will know now, all those people who read this and know us, they will know that these two persons are us"24

Suman Ahuja, while reviewing the novel in the Times of India, observes that jaya "caught in an emotional eddy, endeavours to come to terms with her protean roles while trying to rediscover her true self......" jaya's journey is from a fragmented self to a unified whole. The fragmented self is associated with "women-are-the-victims" theory. But
as the glimmer of self-recognition dawns on her she realizes that she cannot make others, especially her husband, the scapegoat for her failures. Smugness falls away from her "not in bits and pieces but in mammoth tightening chunks". She tries painfully her way back through the disorderly chaotic sequence of events and non-events that made up her life.

So she quits writing in spite of her liberal convictions she still ironically subscribes to the patriarchal conventions; her child she hopes must be a boy. She is tormented by an abortion concealed from her husband. When her young son vanishes from home, she is crushed by a sense of inadequacy as a mother. The writing of this novel, which is a mix of memory and current happening, allows her to break out of That Long Silence:

"I, m not afraid any more, the panic has gone. I m Mohan's wife. I had thought and cut off the bits of me that had refused to be Mohan's wife. Now I know that kind of fragmentation is not possible" Rajeswhari Sunder Rajan that evaluates the Jaya's predicament:
She now reevaluates her life. She chooses to operate with in the self imposed limits of the family resolving to change her life by renegotiating the power-relations and improving the interpersonal relationships within it rather than through the instrumentality of her writing. 

Jaya rejects the image of two bullocks yoked together, for she thinks that is condemning herself to a lifetime of disbelief. Now she has belief in herself. She can choose. The intense searching of the self has brought knowledge of life. Which cannot be lived in vacuum. She realizes that the fault is her own. She has come to turns with a liberated self- a self that does not want to take up a subordinate role. Deshpande invokes the Bhagwadgita and refers to Arjuna's knowledge imparted to him by Lord Krishna; "Do as you desire" she must exercise her choice and give up using prakrit, the language of the downtrodden. Women must assert and change themselves and hope that men will change too:

"...... It's possible that we may not change even over long periods of time. But we can always hope without that
life would be impossible. And if there is anything I know
now it is this: life has always to be made possible (p.193)

Life thus holds no terror for Jaya anymore.

Through these two novels, Shashi Deshpande defines
women as a subject in her own right. Both Indu and Jaya
strive to and fro and obtain a certain autonomy, they have
realized their immense potentialities for action and self-
actualization. Their return home is not defeatism but the
triumph of the independence of women. They learn to live
in society. Their perception is best expressed in Virginia
woolf's 'A Room of one's own" "There is no gate, no lock, no
bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind". 28
Knowing that their mind and vision cannot be denied to
them, knowing that they thus achieved 'personhood',
achieved self-realization, found their voice. They return to
society or become a part of it. Michael Rosenthal's
statement in Virginia woolf regarding Mrs. Ram say and
Lilly can be extended to include Indu and Jaya as well:

"What unities .......them, despite their vast personal
differences, however, is their mutual, reverence for life and
their desire to make something ordered and whole out of the flux around them."29

The Dark Holds No Terrors tells the story of a marriage on the rocks. Sarita (called Saru) is a "two-in-one-woman" who in the daytime is a successful doctor and at night "a terrified trapped animal" in the hands of her husband, Manohar (called Manu), who is an English teacher in a third rate college. The novel opens with Saru returning after fifteen years of her father's house.....a place she had once sworn never to return to..........unable to bear the sexual sadism of her husband. Saru is able to escape from the trap that marriage is, offer a lot of struggle and unhappiness she does succeed in having a room of her own. Isn't it ironical that a woman who looks after the whole family and household does not even have a room of her own. Her life is meaningless. Her existence is immaterial, unimportant. It is a known fact that a Woman's life during childhood, youth and old age is spent in her parent's husband's and son's home respectively. At all the three stages of her life, she is dependent on man for her survival. She is made to live at the margin, never
becomes the subject. Her contribution goes unrecognised. It is taken for granted. But now some women are realising that all norms of traditional feminine behaviour have been laid down by men for their own vested interests. Shashi Deshpande's heroines are courageous enough to revolt against the attempts of men to marginalise them.

Saru, the heroine of The Dark Holds No Terrors is finally able to live a life that is really happy in the true sense: no pretensions, no masks. Her childhood was not a happy one. She has only bitter memories of it. The harsh words of her mother....." why are you still alive?" you killed your brother," "why didn't you die?". Keep ringing in her ears even when she has grown up. She hates her mother and rebels against her by going to Bombay to study medicine. Here she falls in love with Manohar and marries him against the wishes of her mother. Saru hopes that her marriage would close the painful chapter of her childhood days. She did not know that she had only moved from one prison to another........ a worse one. It was hell this time. A girl has to adjust herself twice: first in her father's house, and then in her father-in-law's house. Goffman
When she receives the news of her mother's death, she takes this opportunity to escape the violent world of her husband's house and returns to the family home ostensibly to take care of her father. It is here that she realises that merely shifting between her father's and husband's homes will not provide her the freedom that she desires. She ultimately realises that she has to walk out of these homes to lead her life as she likes. When Saru reaches her father's house, she reflects the events of her life. Hers had been a love marriage. But her husband Manu turns vicious when his career as a poet does not pick up and Saru is successful as a doctor. Earlier she was known as the bride of the poet Manu, but later she was becoming popular and famous as a lady doctor and Manu was referred as her husband. Saru remembers painfully that life is not based on a mathematical theory:

"a+b they told us in maths is equal to b+a. But here a+b was definitely not equal to b+a. It became a
The role of wife in the present time is nothing less than walking on the razor's edge. Realising this fact, Saru was obliged to give ironically the following imaginary advice to future wives in Nalu's college:

"A wife must always be a few feet behind her husband............. That's the only rule to follow if you want a happy marriage. Don't ever try to reverse the doctor-nurse, executive-secretary, principal, teacher role...... Women's magazines will tell you that a marriage should be an equal relationship. That's nonsense. Rubbish. No partnership can be equal. It will always be unequal, but take care that it's unequal in favour of your husband. If the scales till in your favour, God help you, both of you"31.

It was this kind of binary opposition which was pointed out by Helen Sixous, who decoded the implicit political ideology behind such metaphors "as Activity/passivity, Father/Mother, Head/Heart, Man/Woman,
High/low/Superior/inferior which are "hierachized oppositions".\footnote{32}

Elaborating this dichotomy further she observes:

"There is an intrinsic bond between the philosophical and the literary [to the extent that it signifies, literature is commanded by the philosophical] and phallocentrism. The philosophical construct itself starting with the abasement of woman. Subordination of the feminine to the masculine order which appears to be the condition of the functioning of the machine."\footnote{33}

The element of love had disappeared from their relationship. She realises that Manu is a Sadist and this marks the beginning of their marital discord. When her father asks her if something was wrong with her husband, she reacts in a strange manner: "My husband?" she asked, blankly as if she didn't know what the word meant. (p.198), Later she reveals to her father:

"He attacked me like on animal at night, I was sleeping and I woke up and there was this man............this man hurting me with his hands, his teeth, his whole body". (p.200). Now love and romance were only illusions. They
were no longer necessary in her life". She feels that the code word of the present age is sex":

"Fulfilment and happiness came not through love alone but sex. And for me sex was now a dirty word". (p.133).

The tragedy of Saru is that she does not know how to come out of the trap. In her husband's home she was like a terrified and trapped animal. And even in her parent's home she did not find the desired freedom. The change comes when she gradually realises that there is more to life than just relying and depending on a unsuccessful marriage, parents, home, and other such social institutions. Finally, she decides to lead her life as an independent individual. She decides to cut off the traditional bonds of marriage and home and walks into the wide world"

Although she hates her mother, there is one thing that she finds and shares with her....." neither she nor I have that thing 'a room of our own" (p.136) She sees the hollowness, emptiness, nothingness in their lives, when She applies this phrase and relates it to their lives.
She decides to be a puppet no more, standing "futility on the stage for a brief while between areas of darkness" (p.220). She no longer wishes to cling to a tenuous shadow of a disintegrated marriage. She gains self-confidence and becomes assertive. She is a different woman now. Earlier she had asked her father not to open the door for her husband. This was the attitude of a coward, who escapes from tough situations. But now with regained courage and confidence she tells her father: "And Oh yes, Baba, if Manu comes, tell him to wait" (p-221) with these words, she goes to attend to a child who was suffering from fits. She is once again herself - a doctor- a woman "and now there were no more thoughts in her, except those of the child she was going to help" (p.222).

At last she reaches a stage when she is "not beaten down by other people's rejection........by low self-regard, by anxiety, or by conflict". (p.223) The theory goes that "if the self develops in an open, flexible, expansive manner, the individual will continue on the road of self-actualization".
She introspects philosophically and concludes that as escape is a ridiculous idea. There is no escape. It is an individual's own life. One will have to shape as well as face the events of one's life. There is no refuge, other than one's own self. She realizes that she cannot attain happiness through anyone else be it a husband, a father or a child. She can attain peace of mind by her own efforts. No one gives peace. It has to be created within. Thus free from pains and fears, the final picture of Sara is appealing indeed when she confidently waits for what used to be the greatest terror of her life, her husband. She is ready to face him as well as her life.

The search for 'self' is so insistent in Despande's fictional world that one does not feel a change of thought or climate anywhere. Her first novel, The Dark Holds No Terrors (1980), for example, depicts Sarita as a person divided into two halves a "two-in-one woman" who is hardly better than "a terrified trapped animal"35

As a wilful child, she marries Manohar out of her caste and against the wishes of her parents. But after a few years of happy married life they drift apart mentally
and emotionally. The plight of totally terror-stricken, helpless and exhausted Sarita is beautifully brought out in the following passage:

"The dream, the nightmare, Whatever it was, continued. Changing now, like some protean monster, into the horror of rape. This was not to be death by strangulation, it was a monstrous invasion of my body. I tried to move, twisting my body, wriggling under the weight that pinned it down: It was impossible. I was pinioned to a position of an object surrender of my self. I began, in Sheer helplessness, to make small whimpering sounds, piteous cries"36

Getting no respite from her nocturnal tortures and terrors, Sarita goes away to her lonely father leaving behind her two children and husband, only to return at the close of the novel, like Sita of Anita Desai's Where shall we Go This Summer.

We can witness the similar predicament of Jaya in That Long Silence (1988), who is presented as torn 'self between what she was before marriage and what she is after it. Adle king characterises these unfortunate
developments as "odd misfits", "petty bickerings over money" and "jealousy over affections". The couple develop an icy relationship and observe an unbreakable "long silence". In a fit of anger Jaya calls Mohan's mother a 'Cook' (which she surely was). Mohan never expected this from his well-educated and well-cultured English-speaking wife. He has always thought that anger makes a woman unwomanly. His dreams are now shattered, and he slumps into a long-drawn silence. Jaya starts wondering whether "there is such a thing as oneself, intact and whole, waiting to be discovered". She is a victim of circumstances of "an atmosphere of apathy and boredom". Here is an alienated 'self' by all means, longing for love and companionship.

In brief, Shashi Deshpande's relentless search for 'Self' in her short stories as well as in her novels shows that she has largely confined herself to the problems and tortures of the female world. Now here does she encourage her female protagonists to rise in rebellion against the males in the family matters, instead, she wants to build a harmonious relationship between man and woman in a
spirit of give-and-take, in a mood of compromise and reconciliation. She maintains that man and woman are like two wheels of a chariot, and that no chariot can race forward if either of the wheels goes out of order. A proper co-ordination, a reasonable mutual understanding between husband and wife is essential for a happy married life. She has dreamt of happy married life as a harmonious union of husband and wife like two bodies with one soul. Soul is a signal of love, happy married life and dignity of man and woman as an individual. Therefore, Shashi Deshpande has never thought of a revolting house wife which is the core of happy married life. But husband has also to admire her sense of woman as his wife. It is the clear-cut message of Shashi Deshpande in her novels and she has carved out the face of woman in her novels as a looking glass.
REFERENCES


2. Ibid.


8. Ibid. p. 29.


18. Ibid. p. 34.


25. Suman Ahuja, Review in *The Times of India*, October 1989, p. 44.


36. Ibid p. 11-12.


39. Ibid., p. 69.