Chapter IV

Shashi Deshpande’s Art and Techniques
English language is no longer an alien language but very much the language of Indian society. Deshpande believes that Indian terms can be easily expressed in English language. Indian female writers find themselves at ease while writing in English as they are free from socio-cultural complications of their first language. Shashi Deshpande is able to bring out the inner feelings of Indian male self and female self without any restriction of authorial self in her novels. Shashi Deshpande writes in English and offers voice to women’s issues. About her language Deshpande says:

To those of us who write in English, it is neither a foreign language, nor the language of the colonizer, but the language of creativity. Whether the writing is rootless, alienated or elitist should be judged from the writing, not from the language. My writing comes out of myself, the society I live in. It is shaped, as I am, by my family, my ancestry, the place I was born in, the place I live in, the culture I am steeped in, the fact that the writing is in English changes none of these things. (Deshpande 10)

Deshpande uses simple English. She doesn’t like to use garish, bombastic or rhetorical English in her writings. It is so simple and straight that it never obstructs the reading of her readers. Deshpande’s intention is to represent the ethos of Indian middle class and her simple unassuming English reflects it. The language she uses is of the kind used by an average middle class people and convent-educated person. She writes on the middle class individuals and the language used is also middle class English, some of the time a bit erroneous by the British benchmarks. Deshpande concedes that writing in English is a disadvantage in this nation as it estranges the author from the mainstream. Yet, she considers English as one of the Indian languages. She says:
I believe that English writing in this country is a part of our literatures; I consider English as one more of our bhashas as Ganesh calls them. I know that our writing comes out of an involvement with this society, out of our experiences here, our readership is now here, and happily our publishers are here as well. Yet, I am disturbed by the recent trend in English writing which in its pursuits of role models outside, is alienating itself from its roots. (Deshpande 108)

Being an English author she may have a less readers compared to the Hindi authors, yet this does not make her a non-Indian. She is likewise against of being marked as Indian-English Writer. She dissents: "I am an Indian writer. My language just happens to be English, which cannot be called a foreign language at all because it is so much used in India." (Riti 28)

She is against of utilizing the Indian version of English to give an Indian touch to her books:

I do not use Indianisms to make my writing like Indian. I never try to make India look exotic. I do not think of a western audience at all. I belong to Indian literature. I would not like ever to be called an Indo-Anglian writer. I feel strongly about that. (Riti 28)

She is completely mindful of the issues Indian authors in English confront and is of the view that they ought to develop their very own language which will remain particularly Indian, and yet will be English. She has constantly focuses on the Indian readers and not the Western ones.

Therefore, she is ever careful to the issues connected with the contemporary society, for example, the issue of language, and has developed a skill that empowers her to present them practically and convincingly. Shashi Deshpande hates to write propaganda writing. She doesn’t expect to admonish or put forward her own brand of feminism; she is truly worried about individuals. In another interview, she says:
I hate to write propagandist literature. I think good literature and propaganda don’t go together. Any literature written with some viewpoint of proving something rarely turns out to be good literature. Literature comes very spontaneously. When I write I am concerned with people. (Carvalho 269)

Yet, she finds that great deals of men are uncaring to her written work while a considerable number of women are sympathetic with her work. As indicated by her, the purpose for this is “women see a mirror image and men see, perhaps, a deformed image of themselves.” (Carvalho 269) This is by all accounts depicted in her books. It also clarifies her sympathetic depiction of her heroines. Earlier Deshpande was contemptuous of the so-called committed writing in Indian English literature. However, with the progression of time, she understood that all great written work is socially committed writing. She concedes:

There was a time when I was scornful of what is called committed writing. I considered such writing flawed because it being message oriented diminishes its artistic worth. But now I know that all good writing is socially committed writing, it comes out of a concern for the human predicament. I believe, as Camus says, that the greatness of an artist is measured by the balance the writer maintains between the values of creation and the values of humanity. (Deshpande 35)

Deshpande stays away from the straightforward narration and utilizes the flashback technique rather, to attract her readers’ attention. Her flashback technique has been criticized by some critics as it confuses the readers. In books where the writer is to present a variety of characters alongside their relations and cooperation, it gets to be essential for writer to present things in their sequential order and avoid an excessive amount of experimentation. As indicated by Shama Futehally the narrative technique is an instrument which is helpful either when some component of suspense is required, or for a novel with a non-narrative structure.
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In Shashi Deshpande’s books the reader needs to deal with a number of characters all the while and without introduction. On occasion it is befuddling. Thus a chronological clarity is required.

Her protagonists are modern educated young women with freed and dynamic thoughts, in this way even normal incidents procure another meaning. Deshpande has used first person narration which helps her to probe deep into the mind of the protagonist’s hopes, fears, desires, disappointments etc., and in this way highlight the gross gender discrimination prevailing in the society.

Shashi Deshpande has utilized a blend of the first person narration and the third person narration combined with flashback technique to give reality and validity to her works. To understand Deshpande’s development as an author it requires a chronological investigation of the narrative methods used by her in her novels.

In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Deshpande shifts her narrative method from the first person to the third person narrative in each alternate chapter. This twofold narrative technique serves to give extraordinary genuineness to the depiction of the main woman character Sarita’s internal self. Deshpande has admirably fulfilled the undertaking of giving a sensible depiction of the mental trauma Sarita experiences. Deshpande has succeeded in the depiction of Sarita’s mental state with noteworthy objectivity with the help of her mixed narrative technique. Her artistic talent lies in her amalgamating the past with the present consistently through dreams, nightmares, flashbacks, memories and the straightforward third person narration.

Y.S. Sunita Reddy has observed about Shashi Deshpande’s novel *That Long Silence*:

> The narrative with its slow unknottting of memories and unraveling of the soul reads like an interior monologue quite similar to the stream of consciousness technique employed by the like of Virginia Woolf. (Reddy 136)
Another perspective is communicated by Prema Nandkumar, who says:

The novel is not a forbidding stream of consciousness probe in the Virginia Woolf tradition. It is very much a conventional tale full of social realism evoked by links of memory. Not misty recollection but clear-eyed story telling. (Reddy 136)

For the heroine an objective examination of what turned out badly with her marriage and the purposes behind falling as a writer is a sort of catharsis.

In The Binding Vine, Deshpande has used a different narrative technique. In Roots and Shadows, The Dark Holds No Terrors and That Long Silence, Deshpande has used a narrative technique that does not advance chronologically. But rather moves forward and backward thematically, continuously portraying one episode after another till the entire story is revealed. In The Binding Vine Deshpande interlaces three ladies of diverse age, status and training. Urmi portrays whole story in the first person narration. To offer a reasonable and objective representation of Urmi’s mother-in-law Mira’s conjugal experiences, Deshpande has used poetry and writings in her diary. She has excellently and splendidly recreated Mira’s implicit mortification and anguish at being subjected to marital rape through the character of Urmi.

In Small Remedies Deshpande has created a biography within a biography. She probes into the traumatic lives of Madhu, Savitribai Indorekar, Leela and Munni by moving her story forward and backward between the present and the past. The novel works at distinctive levels — the individual, the common, women’s rights, communal violence and parenthood. Through the character of Madhu, Deshpande has offered voice to her own dilemma as an author. Madhu has been assigned by a publisher to write Savitribai Indorekar’s biography and
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she is not able to choose whether she ought to say just what Savitribai advises about herself to Madhu or everything that she thought about her, including her most private secrets. Thus, Deshpande’s has a great skill of interweaving myriad themes into a one close-knit narrative.

Myths are an essential apparatus of narration for novelists. Deshpande, in *That Long Silence* proposes how harmless appearing sleep time stories told to children made subtle yet permanent impression upon their mind. Jaya, the heroine, remembers the tale of the foolish crow and the wise sparrow, which she had frequently heard as a kid. In any case, she doesn’t tell this tale to her kids for fear that it would affect their personality into getting to be similar to the grandiose sparrow that was not in the slightest degree concerned with what happens with the world over but only with her children and family. In *That Long Silence*, Deshpande uses the myths of Sita to present Jaya’s suffering. She tails her Vanita *mami’s* direction that a spouse is like a sheltering tree that ought to be kept alive regardless of the possibility that one needs to water it with deceits and lies.

In *The Binding Vine*, mythological similarities can be found in the stories of Urmila, Mira and Shakuntala and the stories of the legendary characters of their names. The mythological Urmila, Lakshamana’s wife, is left in a broken and distressed state when Lakshamana goes in the forest with the Rama. In this novel Urmila is enormously hurt by the loss of her kid. In this novel, Urmila’s mother-in-law Mira, like her mythological counterpart, stays isolates to her spouse and both Mira want relations with their husbands based on love and not sexual pleasure. Shakuntala’s (Shakutai) husband, similar to her mythological counterpart who had been wronged and abandoned by King Dushyanta, deserts Shakutai in this novel.

Though mythological characters have been used by Shashi Deshpande, she doesn’t consider it to be any cognizant or intentional artistic device. In an interview with Lakshmi Holmstorm, she tells:
I think a number of us do that in India all the time; we relate a great deal to our personal lives, our daily lives, to the myths. We find parallels as a matter of course. And we do this with all the myths, any myth that seems appropriate, whether they were originally about men or women. In that sense it is a part of a language, a grammar that one knows and understands, rather than a conscious literary device. (Holmstrom 24)

Like other literary writers who have utilized myth as a crucial instrument to improve the impact of their works, so has Shashi Deshpande has used myth rather unconsciously.

Use of irony and satire in Deshpande’s fiction is very rare. The vicinity of these artistic devices in her books may not be a purposeful utilization by Deshpande but rather there are some incidents with these devices. The most striking example of her use of irony is in *That Long Silence*, an occasion in which Jaya’s spouse Mohan blames her for staying away from him in his most difficult circumstance. Jaya herself was experiencing enormous mental trauma, and such a statement startles her. She tries to control herself:

I must not laugh, I must not laugh [...] even in the midst of my rising hysteria, a warning bell sounded long and clear, I had to control myself, I had to cork in this laughter. But it was too late. I could not hold it any longer. Laughter burst out of me, spilled over, and Mohan stared at me in horror as I rocked helplessly. *(TLS 122)*

It can be seen as an example of her utilization of wry irony. Later she ends her silence by recording her story, and in this manner recovers her sense by mitigating herself of her unexpressed dissatisfactions. Another endeavor of irony is in Deshpande’s making of the character, Priti, in *The Binding Vine*. At the point when Urmila advises Priti that she was going to publish Mira’s story, she was greatly excited as the story was going to be a shocking
one. She even wants to adopt the story into a film. Indeed, even in Kalpana’s rape, her worry towards her is just deception as she is concerned with the immense publicity as the tragedy will create. However, Deshpande can manage it without these artistic devices, as her style is extremely straightforward for irony and satire.

Through the fiction of Shashi Deshpande, we move into a middle class ethos and the types of male suppression inside of the family take on an uglier, more obvious form. In novel after novel, marriage is indicated to be an organization subjugating women for a lifetime under male control. For instance the narrator Jaya of That Long Silence experiences a time of exceptional introspection, placing her marriage and herself under the investigation of a brutal examination. Her narrative moves intentionally to incorporate a crowd of other women, all victims of an endemic disparity between male force and female weakness inside of marriage. Shashi Deshpande’s investigation of female oppression in patriarchal family structures tackles a bigger dimension.

She creates, in fact, a mosaic of marriage; women come and go, aunts, cousins, mothers, mother-in-law, friends, acquaintances, each providing a different slant on marriage, a dozen sub-texts to the main text of a protagonist whose marriage is collapsing. (Basu 104)

The main center of attention in Shashi Deshpande’s fiction is woman — her travails and misery, anxiety and frustration, torments and anguishes. Her novels propose that compromise is characterizes the life of the common individual in the case of the middle class women in India. Not able to oppose social traditions or conventional ethical quality, she discovers herself trapped by desires and despair, fears and hopes and love.

Deshpande’s female heroines — Saru, Indu, Jaya, Urmi, Sumi and Madhu attempt frantically to shape themselves to fit that image before figuring out how to scrutinize the image itself.
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These developments inside of the heroines become the author’s strategy of uncovering the stereotypes before addressing and re-characterizing them. This is a noteworthy instrument offered by the reminiscential narrative method and serves to off-set the hindrances of the first person narration technique.

While accepting the Sahitya Akademi Award around 10 years ago, Shashi Deshpande had communicated her concern with reviewers who regularly used words like ‘sensitivity’ and ‘sensibility’ if the writer happened to be a woman. She said that she herself thought about her work in the terms of strength. The explanation behind this unfair categorising is not far to look for. Shashi Deshpande’s initial books were published exactly when the post-Midnight’s Children era of authors was turning out to be big news. Since she declined to play by global guidelines, she couldn’t be incorporated in this alliance. The remaining other exportable space the media could consider was the feminist writer. However, anyone who has read her books minutely realizes that her extraordinary quality lies somewhere else - in an uncompromising toughness, in her endeavors to do what has never been endeavored in English before, her emphasis on being read on natural terms and refused to write on the demands of the market. “To achieve something ... you have got to be hard and ruthless... There is no other way of being a saint. Or a painter. A writer.” (TLS 1) This startling first passage of That Long Silence (1988) is the voice of the narrator; however it additionally gives us a piece of information to the writer’s way to deal with writing. Small Remedies is the most confident assertion of this strength and a deliberate denial of sentimentality.

Deshpande’s written work is natural. On Vanamala Vishwanatha’s perception that her writing is not clearly Indian, Deshpande says:

No, I don’t believe in making it obviously Indian. But all this is basically because I’m isolated — I’m not part of any movement and not conscious of
readers to impress. To get wider recognition here and abroad, you have to be in the university and places like that with the right contact. I’m an ordinary woman who writes sitting at home. None of these things are within my reach. This has, I believe, done me good, it has given me great freedom. I’m happy with this anonymity. Once you get publicity-conscious, your writing becomes affected. I’m truly happy with this freedom. (Deshpande 11)

Some basic remarks have been made on Shashi Deshpande’s novels, for example, some critics opine her books are hard to peruse as a few characters show up and vanish and appear without any purpose. Deshpande’s style needs more practicing and experimentation. The plot, as well, would be better if portions of the periphery characters are being avoided. In Deshpande’s first novel *Roots and Shadows*, even a family tree on the initial page does not make any idea of the novel. The use of numerous characters in the novels makes trouble in reading the novels. It can be affirmed that since her books are realistic and based on real life incidents, the use of many characters was necessary. Throughout the years her style has developed as she turned out to be more adaptive in her writing skill.
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The art of Story Telling

Shashi Deshpande has made use of a fine narrative technique and style to make her novels appealing and sensible. She tells the story of her novel employing a common method of storytelling. Indian English authors utilized a regular technique of storytelling, which is the most widely recognized technique for storytelling and the writer, is omnipresent and omniscient in this kind of writing. The first person narration is typically employed by the writer to make his story more practical or more reliable. While novels written in such a way have a ring of legitimacy to them, they don’t allow the writer to look deep into the psyches and thought process of remaining characters. The application of a proper narrative technique was the real issue for the Indian English writers. However, Shashi Deshpande finds the solution of this problem by utilizing a blend of the first person and the third person narrative combined with flashback technique to give force and authenticity to the novel. A chronological scrutiny of Deshpande’s development as an author requires a close investigation of her narrative method and style used by her in her novels. Deshpande’s novels have an exceptionally phenomenal and reasonable storytelling method. At the same time Deshpande’s skill is such that by the end of the journey you are completely enwrapped in the lives of the people that she forces you to contemplate. The very blandness of her characters, the ordinariness with which she anoints them at the outset gradually works in their favour.

Shashi Deshpande has used her incredible narrative technique and style in her novel, *Roots and Shadows*. The present novel deals with the heroine, Indu’s agonizing self-investigation. Along with that, Deshpande tries to cover a few different themes in this novel. There is an issue of woman’s fate in general and the old order giving away to the new order. Deshpande stays away from the basic technique of simple narration and utilizes the flashback system to grab the curiosity of the readers. In the novel, *Roots and Shadows*, the first part related with
the present and alternate sections move in reverse in time in the past and the last section of the novel is again in the present. This kind of narration has been censured by different pundits and critics. These critics say that this sort of narration makes perplexity in the brain of reader. The whole novel is composed in the first person narration. The storyteller is a young lady author who comes back to her childhood home after a long period of fifteen years and finds herself in the whirlpool of family politics. The first person narration likewise permits the novelist to probe deep into the psyche of the heroine, uncovering her fears and dissatisfactions with outstanding authenticity, inviting the acclaim for critics and pundits. A celebrated analyst Watson C. W. compares Shashi Deshpande with the expert story teller Chekhov and he says:

Other South Indian writer has been compared to Chekhov but Shashi Deshpande, in this novel at least, comes closest to that writer, and the tragic-comedy of 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 Chekhov. (Watson 75)

Deshpande’s another novel, The Dark Holds No Terrors, depicts the mental issues confronted by the heroine, Sarita. In this novel, Deshpande shifts the story from the first person to the third person. At the point when Deshpande was asked by Lakshmi Holmstorm in an interview in the matter of how Deshpande had hit upon this method, Deshpande answered:

The present is the third person and the past is the first person. I was doing throughout in the first. But that’s often a perspective I use in my short stories. I wanted to be more objective. So, then 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
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present, otherwise it was going to be far 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. (Deshpande 23-24)

This is the strategy for narrating by which the author tells the story objectively. The book analyst Meenakshi Mukherjee reviews the novel, The Dark Holds No Terrors, and says:

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, flashbacks, introspection and simple straightforward third person narration.

(Mukherjee 31)

Deshpande’s Sahitya Akademi Award winning novel, That Long Silence, is an extremely complex novel about concealment and freedom, and depression and triumph which would influence the protagonist’s mind through recollections and memories. Deshpande’s narrative technique is depicted by the storyteller Jaya herself who in the novel says:

All this I’ve written — it’s like one of those multicoloured patchwork quilts the Kakis made for any new baby in the family. So many bits and pieces — crazy conglomeration of sizes, shapes and colours put together. (TLS 188)

The narration of the novel is similar to the stream of consciousness technique utilized by Virginia Woolf. Prema Nandkumar rightly observes that the novel, That Long Silence

…is not a forbidding stream of consciousness probe in Virginia Woolf tradition. It is very much a conventional tale full of social realism evoked by links of memory. Not misty recollection but clear-eyed story telling. (Reddy 136)
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The storyteller, Jaya, accomplishes a sort of catharsis by an objective examination of what went wrong with her marriage and why she had failed as an author. The narrative technique is delightfully depicted by Jaya who is telling her own story. Therefore the narrative method used in this novel by Deshpande is similar to an interior monolog. Deshpande has blended the present and the past in this novel.

Deshpande’s *The Binding Vine* is a different type of novel. It contrasts in its method of narration from Deshpande’s earlier works. The narrative structure of Deshpande’s prior books, for example, *Roots and Shadows*, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *That Long Silence* don’t grow sequentially, however it moves forward and backward thematically, gradually relating one episode after another until the whole story is uncovered. However, in *The Binding Vine*, separate plots of three distinct stories are interlaced uniting three women isolated by age, status and education. The whole story is described in the first person by Urmi, the heroine of the novel. Deshpande utilized the poetry and writing in a dairy to make glimpses into the life of the storyteller’s mother-in-law, Mira. This novel shows the improvement in Deshpande’s narrative method than her earlier works.

Shashi Deshpande’s next novel, *A Matter of Time*, deals with the human predicament of three women exhibiting three eras of the same family. Surprisingly, Deshpande makes a man the hero of her novel. In this novel, Gopal leaves his family including his wife and three daughters. The novel is described in the first person. The past and the present are again blended with one another in this novel. The novel is organized skillfully and it tells a despicable story of a betrayed woman, Sumi and her three daughters. In this novel, mother-girl relationship is perfectly introduced by the writer. Deshpande utilized irony and satire to show the problem of Indian woman in Indian culture. A Review in the New York Times observes that,
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Deshpande’s unadorned style refuses to call attention itselfand that the book is written in ‘an unfussy, unmagical prose,’ surely a compliment at a time when use of an unexoticized English language by writers in India is a much debated topic. (Mclane)

Deshpande’s novel, Small Remedies, manages diverse subjects like the individual, the common, women’s rights, and motherhood. It blends the past and the present concentrating on the lives of Savitribai, Leela, Munni and the storyteller Madhu herself. It is organized as a biography within a biography, with the author Madhu, frequently in an issue about how to tell her story. Madhu narrates the story of the novel. In this story woman’s problem, Indian convention and woman’s battle for freedom is skillfully displayed by Deshpande. Deshpande reliably mirrors the life as it is with no personal commentary and clarification in this novel. The present novel is exceedingly feminist novel. But she wouldn’t like to teach an ethical lesson to the general public through this novel. Deshpande makes it clear that she doesn’t keep in touch with her books with social reason. They are composed suddenly whatever she supposes in her brain. Subsequently, Deshpande says in a meeting to Sue Dickman:

Somebody once asked me if I have a social purpose in my writing and I very loudly said, ‘No,’ I have no social purpose, I write because it comes to me.

(Dickman 34)

Deshpande’s plain however powerful writing reads like a grandma’s story which originates from the heart and reaches deep into the heart of its readers. In the event that at one point the use of omniscient narration teases the reader as the speaker claims to anticipate occasions however is not prepared to share until time and plot unravels it, at on the other hand there is a sudden disclosure of plot for poignant appeal.
Deshpande’s novel, *Moving On*, is a presentation of a personal diary of a dead man, read by his daughter and her own musings spinning around the pages she read and her own particular point of view about the past which comprises of her parents, husband and kids. The book discusses familial bonds, relationships and responsibility. At times you simply don’t have exact words to narrate what you feel about specific things. Deshpande’s command over language, verbal capacity to coordinate the plot and effectiveness with which the story moves and dwells the characters that are intended to shape the whole book is really amazing.

Deshpande’s novel, *In the Country of Deceit*, is a skillfully organized novel. Devayani is a young married lady living at Rajnur in Karnataka. She is presently recuperating from the loss of her mom and beginning a new life. Devayani decides to live alone in the Rajnur after her parents’ death, disregarding the delicate objection to her family and friends. Teaching English, making a garden and maintaining friendship with Rani, a retired actress who settles in the town with her spouse and three children, Devayani’s life is serene, pervaded with a hard-won freedom. At that point she meets Ashok Chinappa, Rajnur’s District Superintendent of Police, and they fall in love in spite of knowing that Ashok is much older, married, and—as both awfully aware from its starting point that it is a relationship without a future.

Deshpande’s writing method is easy enough to her readers thus the pages fly when one reads this novel. The story is told from Devayani’s perspective. The setting of the novel is extremely real residential community in India-and the characters depicted in the book look truly authentic. The love story is very interesting with a mixed closure. The narrative is in the first person from Devayani’s viewpoint. Deshpande uses letters from different individuals to Devayani most likely to represent the other characters and their points of view. But this falls flat as the matter of the letters is stilted and doubtlessly not sensible. There is no major distinction between the narrator of story and letters and their tone.
Deshpande opens the heart of her heroines to introduce the internal contemplations of her courageous women. In this way, the narrative gets to be reasonable or real which makes an excellent story of her books. For sure “Shashi Deshpande’s extraordinary skill in portraying inner psychology builds a tale of beauty”. (Vishy Jan. 2015) In her books, she utilizes the Indian myth which makes an epic quality in her books. In this way, “There is an epic quality that she brings to her portraits of families in a time of flux and disintegration of group identities” (Vishy Jan. 2015) Deshpande is a capable Indian writer who has a full control over the words. Her style of composing is exceptionally tempting for the readers. Trained as a writer, Deshpande’s work concentrates on the authenticity and truth of the lives of Indian women.

It has been said that Deshpande repeats the same novel again and again. Indeed, her fictions frequently start with a married woman retreating to her parents’ family and go ahead with family secrets being gradually uncovered. In any case, it is not true, her every novel has a different topic, different protagonists which makes new meaning every time. Truly, Shashi Deshpande has given an extraordinary contribution for the Indian English Literature. However, she makes it sure that she doesn’t contribute for the propagandist writing.

It implies that Deshpande writes just for individuals and the writing comes to her spontaneously. Deshpande says that her written work mirrors the live image of the world. It is noticed that Deshpande utilizes irony and satire or humor in her every book. We discover the flashes of irony and satire in her books yet they don’t appear to be incorporated purposefully by Deshpande. She utilizes the Indian myth from Ramayana and Mahabharata in her novels. But she doesn’t accept that myth is utilized as an artistic device by her.

Besides narrative technique and style of writing, the most difficult task before Indian English authors is the utilization of English language in a manner that will be typically Indian.
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English. The issue arises from the considerable distinction between the Indian and the Western societies. Like the initial Indian English authors who utilized the English language as per their ability, Shashi Deshpande as well writes in this language to offer voice to women’s’ issues. Her creative use of the language has been greatly lauded in the *Times Literary Supplement*:

Deshpande eschews linguistic pyrotechnics and formal experimentation, but has sufficient command of her tradition to give the lie to the belief that the English language is incapable of expressing any Indian world other than a cosmopolitan one. (Couto N.p.)

Deshpande is from a middle class, Marathi-Cannada family, and she was educated in English at a local school in Dharwad, Karnataka and after that in Mumbai. It is these impacts which have an imperative influence in forming her writing and the use of the English language. Because of her this background she has used a few expressions of Marathi dialect in her writing.

The sort of English which she uses is an extremely simple. She doesn’t use flashy, pompous or bombastic English language in her novels. It is so basic and uncomplicated that it never impedes the readers in any case. She says in regards to her use of English: My English is as we use it. I don’t make it easier for anyone really. If I make any changes, it’s because the novel needs it, not because the reader needs it. (Deshpande 26)

Deshpande’s intention has been to express the Indian middle class ethos which is aptly reflected in her straightforward and unassuming English language. She writes on the middle class people and the language used by her is also the language of middle class people, sometimes it does not match the British standards.
Use of Myth, Metaphors and Folklore

Myths and folklore have become an important part of Shashi Deshpande’s fictions. In her fictions these myths and folklores becomes characters in themselves. The writer sticks to the role of myths as strong social and cultural determinants.

In the novel *That Long Silence*, various myths have been used by Shashi Deshpande. Some of them are the worshipers of Tulsi plant for the long life of their husbands, myths of Sita, Draupadi, Gandhari, Maitreyee, Savithri etc. Every one of these references introduces the protagonist. The folktale of sparrow and the crow making a wax house is an imperative reference. The ideas of Manusmriti and other Indian epics are utilized to express certain legislative issues.

In *A Matter of Time*, mythical characters of Sairandhri (Draupadi), Surpanakha, and so on are utilized to evaluate the eulogized concepts of parenthood and wifehood and female sexuality. The primeval practices of Vanaprastha and the Buddha-Yashodhara incidents have been used to illustrate upon familial relations. Examples from *Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad* also become pivotal in the novel. The writer has naturally used myths without bothering about religion and limits. All these combine the idealized ideas in Indian social milieu. By this, she reinforces the characters as well as maintains the narrative and imparts profundity and complexity to her work.

Myths are symbolic stories of the past that may be joined with belief systems or ceremonies and may serve to direct social activities and values of contemporary life. Myths and folklore improve the understanding of the world order. According to M.H.Abrahms:

> In classical Greek, “mythos” signifies any story or plot, whether true or invented. In its central modern significance, however, myth is one story in a
mythology - a system of hereditary stories of ancient origin which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group, and which served to explain (in terms of the intentions and actions of deities and other supernatural beings) for social customs and observances, and to establish the sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives. (Abrams 230)

Folktales are also the essential part of the social life of every society. As per M.H. Abrams, “if the hereditary story concerns supernatural beings who are not gods, and the story is not a part of a systematic mythology, it is usually classified as a folktale”. (Abrams 231) The ever extending study of myth, morality and folklores encodes more profound understandings of the world order, including individuals’ relationships inside of the social set up, with nature, with supernatural elements and of the astronomical order. Folklore and community writing gives an image of people’s mind, different relations inside and outside the society.

Myths have turned into an essential motif in feminist writing. Numerous women authors have sort to old myth that are reproduced or revisited to that shapes and offers a different perspective. Numerous feminists look ideally onto motifs in old myths that appear to demonstrate a conceivable past in which women had more roles to perform, even a leading role in the society. These alleged matriarchal myths give women confidence and hope that they need not be condemned to unending status as secondary citizens, for such was not always the case. It is at this point that the role of Shashi Deshpande as an Indian English author draws our consideration. Indian womanhood is intensely anticipated through her utilization of myth and fables. Her heroines, who are middleclass educated women, demonstrate no devotion to rituals. Shashi Deshpande has represents the transitional period of tradition and modernity. Her characters are deeply attached with customs and traditions. In the meantime, they are moving towards complete liberation. However, their changes of life
and the characters that go over their life make the intrusion of myths and folklore where necessary.

Shashi Deshpande has given a new meaning to different myths and folklores not only to manage the situation, but it also throws light on certain typical features of the characters portrayed in the novel. It also illuminates the inner world of women’s minds. According to A.S. Rao,

…the post-modern texts move back and forth in terms of time-space reality depending on the situation. Such texts use myth both for mediations and subversions, accordingly, as they elevate or subvert the myths for delineation of truth. (Rao 10)

*That Long Silence* deals with a crisis in a family, which starts a process of retrospection and introspection. Jaya, an urban, middle-class woman aware of liberal western ideas looks to liberate herself from Chauvinistic ideas like the husband is a sheltering tree. Also into the texture of a novel about Jaya and Mohan, several tragedies of subordination are woven as though to form of a tapestry. And at the end of the novel, Jaya asks herself in honest self-doubt and self-evaluation the question: “but why am I making myself the heroine of this story?” (*TLS* 193)

In, *That Long Silence* Deshpande makes numerous references to Indian epics and allusions to archetypal characters like Dasarath, Rama, Sita, Draupadi and Gandhari. Occasionally she has also used popular beliefs like, “tell lies now and you’ll be a lizard in your next life, steel things and you’ll be a dog, cheat people and you’ll be a snake” (*TLS* 128)

She had been raised in a traditional family and comfortable to follow the strides of the mythological role models. At one stage she tries to compare herself and Gandhari: “if
Gandhari, who bandaged her eyes to become blind like her husband could be called an ideal wife, I was an ideal wife too I bandaged my eyes tightly. I don’t want to know anything”. *(TLS 144)* Mohan wants that Jaya will follow him in his disrespect. They move to the Dadar flat to get away from the scandal of his malpractice:

> I remember now that he had assumed I would accompany him, had taken for granted my acquiescence in his plans. So had I. Sita following her husband into exile, Savitri dogging Death to reclaim her husband, Draupadi stoically sharing her husband’s travails.... *(TLS 11)*

The folktale of the sparrow and the crow is formed in a fascinating way into the novel. The story is that the sparrow makes her home of wax and the silly crow constructs a place of dung that melts away in the downpour. The crow comes knocking at the sparrow’s door. The sparrow takes as much time as is needed opening the door and the crow is let in and directed to the frying pan to warm herself where he predictably perishes. She rejects “Suhasini”, the name given to her by her spouse Mohan, when she needs to compare Suhasini to the sparrow in the story, she says:

> I have a feeling that even if little boys can forget thi story, little girls never will. They will store this story in their subconscious, their unconscious or whatever and eventually they will become that damnably, insufferably priggish sparrow looking after their homes, their babies.. and to hell with the rest of the world. Stay at home, look after babies, keep out the rest of the world and you’re safe. The poor idiotic woman Suhasini believed in thi. I know better now. I know that safety is always unattainable. You’re never safe. *(TLS 117)*
Jaya’s self-investigation uncovers her that she needed courage and the privilege of making her decisions. When she is in this profound thinking, Maitreyee strikes a chord of her mind who also have dismissed her husband Yajnavalkya’s offer of a large portion of his property-

“Will this property give me immortality? she asked him. “No”, he said and she immediately rejected the property. To know what you want I have been denied that.” Jaya says, “even now I do not know what I want. (TLS 25)

Jaya feels if Mohan is a sinner, then she too has to accept herself as one. She says,

…there was a simple word I had to take into account: retribution…. An act and retribution- they followed each other naturally and inevitably. Dasarath killed an innocent young boy whose parents died crying out for their son. And years later, Dasarath died too, calling out for his son ‘Rama Rama’. (TLS 128)

Finally she understands that she needs to settle on a decision which she could call her own to state her individuality.

Shashi Deshpande’s *A Matter of Time*, interestingly follows the change of the belief system from the period of the disguise of patriarchal qualities through awareness of the importance of female bonding and self-identity to assert women’s’ rights. Deshpande’s this is the only novel which has a male hero Gopal. The novel also tries to follow the predicament of the woman who bears the burden of the entire family when her spouse goes out all of a sudden without articulating a word. Sumi’s parents Kayani and Shripati spend a long time of almost thirty five years without talking with one another. Four different generations of women venture four mixed bags of the ideology inside of the same family outlining the course of social history and ideological change.
Sumi wasn’t an ordinary mother who stressed over the rearing of her three young daughters. Rather, it was Gopal who completed his obligations to the daughters that a mother was relied upon to do. Her distinction is clear from the way she thought about Draupadi’s disguise as Sairandhri, the queen’s mistress: “Don’t you think this was something she had often wanted, to be by herself, to sleep alone, to be free, for a while, of her five husbands?” (AMoT 85) Her thoughts reflect her mind to be free, to be her own mistress and “not to have to share her bed every night with a husband” (AMoT 86) Indian mythology portrays woman more as an absence than presence,. Regardless of this situation Deshpande has interestingly changed the Indian myths to make a space for women to challenge the custom of subservience. Her modification of the myth of Draupadi/Sairandhri of The Mahabharata reveals new truths and outcomes related to female psychology because conventionally, it is accepted that a married woman without her husband is unhappy and incomplete. To cite Chitaranjan Kazhungil:

Deshpande through re-orientation of the myth suggests that a married woman may desire to enjoy an independent existence occasionally. Psychically, acceptance of the issue of mutual ‘otherness’ is not only a confirmation of present marital health but also a sign of future happiness. (Kazhungil)

Once more, Sumi deconstructs and remakes the entire Ramayana, which is clear from her following thought:

If we are to construct a world, why not shape one with the hopelessness left out, why not end with the hope of happiness the promise of realization? Bhavabhuti reneged against the rules in his Uttararamacharita, he looked beyond the safe family portrait of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, with Hanuman kneeling at their feet, and look what a tragedy he conjured up! (AMoT 158)
After Gopal’s leaving, her inventiveness gets restored. She writes a play—‘The Gardener’s Son’ and proposes to compose another. “It feels so great”, she concede, “and now abruptly I need to do as such numerous things”. (AMoT 231) She additionally needed to modify the tale of Surpanakha from a unique perspective:

Female sexuality. We’re embarrassed about owning it, we can’t talk about it, not even to our own selves. Be that as it may, Surpanakha was not, she talked about her goals, she displayed them. What’s more, thusly, were the men, unused to such ladies, scared? Did they feel undermined by her? I suspect as much. Suparnakha, neither appalling nor revolting, however a lady accused of sexuality, not terrified of showing it—it is his Suparnakha I’m going to expound on. (AMoT 191)

The alteration of the Surpanakha incident shows Sumi’s enthusiasm to place man-woman relations on equal grounds.

Gopal’s renunciation can be considered as sanyasa the fourth and last phase of asrama in the Indian traditional society. In this light, it can be viewed as Gopal’s abandonment connotes the Vedic renunciation of liberating himself of all servitude. But, it can’t be considered as sanyasa in one sense on the grounds that as indicated by the Indian sacred writings, a man could repudiate his reality just when he had released every one of his responsibilities towards his family.

One thing that strikes the reader is that there is a common understanding between Sumi and Gopal about partition. Sumi never troubles him by asking questions about his departure and he too sees perfectly that he has not expected to inflict pain and not get it in return. This helps us to remember one of the readings of the life of Buddha where his wife Yashodhara, clearly
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knew that he would leave the material life. It has been deciphered that she has supported him to go ahead along his chosen way. At the point when Sumi remarks on Sairandhri/Draupadi, Gopal considers his own condition through another legendary character Arjuna:

What about Arjuna becoming Brihannala? Yes, that was easy, Arjuna, tired of the male world of war and violence, of relating to woman only as Lord and conqueror, became Brihannala, the eunuch, so that he could enter the gentle world of women, of music and dancing and become as insider in this world. (AMoT 86)

We see a point made by the writer that, including Gopal, individuals have a tendency to adhere to the society and the feeling of non-having a place anywhere disappoints them and they choose to depart. At the point when Gopal understands the erupted displeasure of his daughter Aru on his desertion of the family and her desire to set everything right, he remarks:

When I was her age, I wanted to put the world right too. I was sure a revolution is the answer. Blow up all the baddies and all will be well. My father told me to read the story of Nahusha. I didn’t know it then, I didn’t even know it was in the Mahabharatha. I read it much later after my father’s death and now I know why he wanted me to read it. It tells us that every revolution carries within it the seed of its own destruction. One oppression only replaces another. (AMoT 214)

As per Susan Wadley, “The great wife spares her spouse from death, tails him anyplace, demonstrates her temperance, stays under his control and gives him her energy” (Wadley 32)

Sita is thought to be the image of chastity, virtue, delicate delicacy and a singular faithfulness which even her husband Rama couldn’t demolish as a result of his dismissals and negligence. It is additionally to be noticed that the same epic gives us a picture of masculinity in the
Hindu society. Rama, supposed to have every quality of a saint and a God. However, he is fragile and mistrustful, both to his parents’ wishes and their sentiment. With all these trivialities in his character, the woman has to acknowledge him as the perfect spouse. The same happens to Draupadi in the *Mahabharatha* where her spouse Yudhisthira pawns her in gambling. She has to bear insult in front of all the courtiers, has to endure it quietly and follow her spouse in all ordeals so as to satisfy the obligations of a perfect wife. Savitri has the capacity to bring back her husband from Yama, the God of Death, through her pure and flawless Wifehood. All these mythologies have been infused deep into the Indian society which spoils the life of individuals like Jaya who wish to be free of the burdening familial relationships. In Deshpande’s novels there are events of certain mythological rituals like circumambulation of tulsi plant for the longer life of husband, taking *Vratas* and fasts for the same, and so on.

As indicated by K.K.Sunalini, “Deshpande does not utilize myth and legend as adornment or for nearby shading or ethnic appliqué-work”. (Sunalini 39) To conclude, let me quote Eleazer M. Meletinsky-

> Myth goes about as the pattern for writing, and its allegorical quality permits it to assume the same part in writing as geometry does in painting, Frye contends that the figurative premise of myth is connected to the imaginative power of the image, and the semiotic part of myth is connected to its spellbinding function. (Meletinsky 88)
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