

An Effectual Evaluation of Selected Novels of Shashi Deshpade and Jane Austen towards Women Characters

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Abstract

One of the most well-known and respected authors in the field of English literature is generally regarded as being Jane Austen. Austen's novels frequently make use of crucial societal criticism, subtle discourse, and effective realism. Austen has a keen understanding of family dynamics, and she depicts the interactions between children and parents as well as how parents raise their offspring in her books. A reader can see that Jane Austen portrays her women characters as strong and extremely influential after carefully examining her writings. Her women characters tend to be sensitive and young, and readers can easily draw parallels between these characters. Critics have noted that Austen expresses her opinions through her characters, whether through their actions or her own statements. The women characters of Jane Austen are characterised by a healthy balance between childhood and adulthood, as well as by the numerous challenges and occasionally agonising decisions that come with mounting up. Shashi Deshpande's novels are a realistic depiction of the anguish and conflict of the modern educated middle-class women. Caught between patriarchy and tradition on the one hand, and self-expression, individuality and independence on the other, her

protagonists feel themselves as a human being. Deshpande's concern and sympathy are essentially for the woman. She has given an honest portrayal of her fears, sufferings, disappointments and frustrations. Besides revealing the woman's struggle to secure self-respect and self-identity, the author lays bare the multiple levels of oppression, including sexual oppression. Deshpande's primary concern for the woman makes her a feminist writer. A significant contribution to Indian fiction in English is said to have issued from the hands of women writers who wrote what they experienced. Jane Austen's novels are a model for exquisite love and marriage. The most common human preoccupation is marriage, and she takes it up in its diverse forms as essential to all adolescent young men and women. An ideal relationship being the chief concern of Jane Austen, she brings out, in the third chapter, the different aspects of relationships basing on one's own choice of suitable companion in marriage which would decide their destiny, an important point in the whole thesis. Compatibility of partners in one's marriage is fundamental, as incompatibility leads to marital disharmony and consequential upbringing of children.

Keywords : Women Characters in English Novels, English Literature and Women, Women and Literature Coverage

Introduction

The women characters of Jane Austen, who represent different eras of Austen's life, frequently exhibit traits of independence, a strong personality, resourcefulness, and intelligence. It could be challenging for a reader to identify a perfect female role model who exemplifies the idea of ideal womanhood.

Among the heroines created by author Jane Austen, Anne and Fanny hold a unique place in the hearts of readers. They both have never made a mistake in life. They are the only characters left standing after the conclusion of their storylines. The heroines in Jane Austen's well-known literary works serve as excellent examples of her outstanding sense of humour, quick wit, and creative skill. Critics point out that Austen is depicted as having always noble intentions and a strong, almost compulsive need to sacrifice oneself. Beautiful Anne lost her bloom after breaking off her engagement to Wentworth. The variety of circumstances that Anne and Fanny encounter force them to make mistakes. In Anne's situation, she maintains her affections and emotions for her beloved while being steadfast in her surroundings. Anne identifies Wentworth only based on her understanding of her own natural sentiments and ideas, not on the basis of his outward performances. Until the book's conclusion, Anne maintains her unique personality. A researcher can see that the heroines of the aforementioned novels reveal a different approach to portraying the concept of marvellous woman, despite the fact that the situational construction for Austen's two novels *Persuasion* and *Pride and Prejudice* share some similar views that they needed comparison. Jane Austen writes in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Persuasion* that the brave rejection of the suitor by the female character is a crucial plot point for the novelist to express her main thesis. Even though some of Austen's heroines make faults in their neighbourhood, they eventually become flawless. In Austen's books, strong female protagonists like Elizabeth Bennet and Anne Eliot fight for the rights of women. However, a researcher can discover that both Elizabeth and Anne retain their capacity for handling their own family matters.

In addition to writing on the relationship between men and women and the hardships of women at the time, Jane Austen also had some disdainful criticisms of society,

particularly as it related to women. Jane Austen has the reputation of exclusively writing about young, vibrant women characters who were frequently mocked for having just one interest in life: marriage. But a thoughtful reader won't quickly come to the notion that Austen only wrote about women. It could be unreasonable to expect readers to connect more contemporary feminist writers with Jane Austen's clear message. Jane Austen is widely regarded as a well-known romance author, and reviewers have noted that she included feminist ideals into some of her works. Her book *Pride and Prejudice*, which explores the repression of women, was written from the viewpoints of romantic feminism. This book depicts the possibilities, fantasy, and reality of women. It is crucial for a scholar to comprehend that as Jane Austen's writing career advances, there is a romantic shift in the feminist and defining philosophy of her novel. Austen started to revere the intellectual attributes of her female characters rather than the outward displays of her heroines. Devoney Looser notes that because of her ideological, cultural, and social ties to the established church, the established professional middle class, and the dominating class, the landed gentry, Austen's stance toward this romantic feminism was inescapably hostile.

In the key novels and literatures, Jane Austen uses two different kinds of characters. In the roughly twenty-seven years of her creative career, she produced six novels. Leading female characters can be found throughout Jane Austen's well-known books, including *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, and *Persuasion*. Some of her protagonists are excellent people who remained the same at the end. Certain of them committed some errors, which were later corrected. Each of Austen's most admirable women characters either possesses or develops strong scruples and a feeling of personal accountability. Jane Austen explores the idea of

femininity via her female characters and looks for the key characteristics of the ideal woman. Jane Austen had a strong conviction that snobbishness existed in upper-class and middle-class English societies. Jane Austen illustrates both the good and bad aspects of femininity with the aid of two different types of female characters. The female characters in Jane Austen's books fall into two categories: those who remain untouched at the end of the story and those who undergo change due to either their own faults or the actions of other people or things. The women characters in Austen's novels are strong, smart, and feminised.

The symbolism of Shashi Deshpande are numerous. She fights for the recognition of women as people and advocates for English as an Indian language at intellectual discussions. Her remarks remain long after she leaves because she speaks the truth in a gentle yet firm manner. In addition to bringing out the possibility of women elucidating themselves and emerging from the situation of self-negligence to spread their wings of self-assurance, the present paper extends the reality story about women, who representing themselves or for all of womankind is very different from a man telling a women's story.

Similar to Virginia Woolf and Jane Austen, Shashi Deshpande writes rhapsodists about sentiments, presumptions, and feelings that traverse human cognizance. Their focus is also on how women cope with the complicated social pressures and worries of Indian society. A new generation of women emerged, understanding the new characteristics in which women now have their own voice after being silenced for a long period. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), *That Long Silence* (1988), and *The Binding Vine* are three novels by Shashi Deshpande that have been used as examples in the current effort to

identify the concept of residential associations (1992). The aforementioned excerpt from one of the creator's own investigations accurately captures Shashi Deshpande, who is known in literary circles for capturing the everyday life of the average Indian woman.

Shashi Deshpande's novels are a realistic depiction of the anguish and conflict of the modern educated middle-class women. A significant contribution to Indian fiction in English is said to have issued from the hands of women writers who wrote what they experienced. Jane Austen's novels are a model for exquisite love and marriage. The most common human preoccupation is marriage, and she takes it up in its diverse forms as essential to all adolescent young men and women. An ideal relationship being the chief concern of Jane Austen, she brings out, in the third chapter, the different aspects of relationships basing on one's own choice of suitable companion in marriage which would decide their destiny, an important point in the whole thesis. Compatibility of partners in one's marriage is fundamental, as incompatibility leads to marital disharmony and consequential upbringing of children. To explore the different types of relationships we come across various types of marriages in relation to the parents of the protagonists and the effect of such marriages on the psyche of their children. Attention is given to this aspect of marriage when each of her novels is discussed individually. Most of the parents' marriages are based on physical attraction of beauty and youth, while those of the siblings, the protagonists, are based on love and esteem for their partners in their search for ideal and best forms of marriage.

Shashi Deshpande has fulfilled her role as a heroine of the persecuted woman via her works. She believes that a woman is not treated equally with a male in any circle of human movement, whether it be in India or other countries. She has been mistreated,

repressed, and undervalued in the matters of sharing the open door for her life's fulfilment since the post-Aryan age. Deshpande is gravely aware of the situation and hardship of Indian women. A careful examination of her books reveals that she chooses the ladies who become their protagonists from the white collar culture. Most of them are sensitive, cunning, educated, and bearer arranged. Through the actions of the women heroes—Indu, Saru, Jaya, Urmila, and Sumi—who become caught up in the jobs assigned to them by the general public, their misery and torment have been brought to light. They have been portrayed as attempting to prove their individuality while battling social taboos. Deshpande alludes to the fantasies, tales, puranas, as well as other blessed literature where women, although being blameless, have been portrayed as the epitome of pativrata - obeying males and giving in to their wishes. She states: "Every single woman in the stories was created by males to meet their various desires. There is a constant child to protect and control, a kind mother to support and adore, the best partner to ensure that a man has exclusive power over her body and that children are unquestionably his, as well as a flirt to titillate and provide sexual pleasure. Finally, the goddess who bestows moral character. What effects a true reasoning? Do you feel motivated by this emotion, lady? These are absolutely questions that women will ask".

In terms of women's fiction, Shashi Deshpande has gotten into writing some incredibly important books. Whatever the case, she definitely has a strategy for handling feminism. While her novels portray ongoing research, her short fiction focuses on verse attentiveness. In her works, these themes—dissatisfactions, blame, misfortune, and dejection—have been addressed, hidden, and highlighted on a larger scale. They obviously evolve into feminist discussions. An accurate and analytical analysis of her

books reveals various assessments of the cruelty and depravity inflicted on educated white collar class women in Indian culture.

Shashi Deshpande calls Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* and Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* "fantastic books," but she only occasionally appreciates Desai's "foreigner's" perspective of India and finds that the majority of her novels lack the "thickness in human relationship" that Deshpande so highly values. She legitimately doesn't sense a "Connection" with contemporary Indian English writers. In any event, she views Rushdie as a trailblazer. According to her, *His Midnight Children* is a book that "changed everything for Indians writing in English" and is "unique, wonderful, unusual, (and) on occasion, unfathomable." *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Rushdie's most recent book, is "overwhelmingly populated with imaginary characters" and "by and large crammed with history." Deshpande would not concur with Rushdie's claim that certain writing is underappreciated, as detailed in his *Imaginary Homelands!* additionally, somewhere else. She declares, "To me as a reader there are no edges," and adds, "We should not be overpowered by the 'Realm Strikes Back' amazement that we overlook the setting in which the majority of us here comprise."

The Dark Holds No Terrors (1980), *If I Die Today* (1982), *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983), *Roots and Shadows* (1988), *That Long Silence* (1988), *The Binding Vine* (1992), *A Matter of Time* (1996), *Small Remedies* (2001), and *Moving On* are the nine novels that Deshpande has published to date (2004). Her four children's books, *A Sum-Adventure*, *The Only Witness*, and *The Hidden Treasure*, which are all based on the works of Enid Blyton, who established the standards for children's literature in the West, were written concurrently with the publication of her novels. *The Narayanpur Incident*,

her fourth book for young readers, is based on the Quit India Movement and the role that children played in it. The remaining books in this series are cohesive, and they all made a remarkable impact on the field of children's literature. Nevertheless, Deshpande's novels are what have made her famous. Her "most cherished work" is *The Dark Holds No Terrors*.

Conclusion

Shashi Deshpande strives to represent feminine reason in her works. Overall, women ought to be free in all of life's tactics and recognition, just like male counterparts. They fight for political and general women's rights equality. They emphasise how highly people view women in society. Current Indian women's search for these definitions of oneself, society, and relationships that are vital to women is demonstrated by Shashi Deshpande in her books. The path toward a female identity is a motif in Shashi Deshpande's novel. The difficulties in man-woman relationships, particularly when it comes to marriage, and the harm caused by an accelerated puberty. The Indian woman has been a silent sufferer for a very long time. She has worked in a variety of roles as a wife, mother, sister, and young child, but she has never been able to ensure her own independence. In his novels, Shashi Deshpande manages the women from the Indian working class. In her writings, she controls the inner world of Indian women. She gives her heroines realistic portrayals. Relationships form the backbone of Indian society. Right from the very beginning, the very structure of Indian society and family life in India revolves round the concept of relationships. The nature of Indian society is such that its roots are embedded in relationships, which are larger than life. The structure of relationships is largely determined by the individual's behavior and his temperament. Some relationships are transitory while others last long till the doom's day. The Indian

family structure is one such unit that imbibes the value of and worth of a virtuous living to all the family members. Despite the growing impact of Westernization and urbanization, the joint family has remained the chief social force. Jane Austen might be one of the most well-known names in British literature today, but during her lifetime, no one would have guessed that this proper daughter of an English clergyman could have possessed such ironic humor, keen insight, and biting wit regarding the social lives of those in her pre-Victorian era. No one would have guessed it, and indeed very few besides her family and close friends even knew. During the early 1800s, when Jane Austen was composing and publishing her works, fictional novels were frowned upon by some segments of society, and novels written by women were especially shunned. In fact, many of Austen's works went to print with no name on the title page to avoid linking her to the negative stigma of female authorship. Although anonymity and lack of recognition and fame characterized her life, Jane Austen's novels have since become celebrated, enjoyed, and studied for their humorous and pointed observations of societal life, lively character interaction, and detailed style.

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