

SEARCH OF RECOGNITION BY SHASHI DESHPANDE IN SHIP THAT PASS

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Abstract

The way that Shashi Deshpande presents female characters is particularly striking. She is consistently attracted to the emotional side of Indian women's lives. Her female characters are frequently caught between the allure of modernity and the shackles of tradition. As this paper examines a selected novel "Ship that pass" by Shashi Deshpande who has produced numerous noteworthy feminist works, Shashi Deshpande is a prominent feminist who has raised the voices of women who remain at home and make their voices heard, regardless of being a wife, a mother, or a daughter. Almost on the spur of the moment, Tara's sister Radhika got engaged to Ghanshyam, a stranger, after fourteen years of marriage to Shaan. Amid Radhika's struggle to understand why her marriage has crumbled and cope with her love for a doctor (Ram Mohan), tragedy strikes: Tara is killed in mysterious circumstances, and Shaan is jailed for her murder. As a metaphor for life, this delicate novel draws attention to the cruel truth that, no matter how hard one tries to hold on to relationships, they can sometimes be like ships passing each other in the night, and they often have little in common. Shashi Deshpande's novels illustrate the inner workings of women, and they reveal how they look for freedom from the confines they have been forced to live in. It is about a woman

gaining insight into her inner being, exploring the female mind, and understanding life's riddles and her position within it in Shashi Deshpande's works.

Keywords: recognition, search, female characters, depiction, Indian women.

Introduction

Shashi Deshpande's work focuses on women's self-recognition in contemporary India's traditional constrained, male-dominated middle-class society. Her heroines are intelligent, sympathetic, and career-driven. The frustrations and disappointments of women who face social and cultural subjugation in a male-dominated culture are eloquently expressed in her works. Shashi Deshpande's writing career began unexpectedly. "There was nothing," she says.

"That's exactly what was going on. Perhaps it was holding up on the inside and then appeared out of nowhere. Until that time, I had been trying to see what I might accomplish. I was dissatisfied with

my life because all I could do was care for my home and children. It was possible that it was a claustrophobic presence. Something was brewing inside of me, and it was this that triggered the outburst. If not, it could have resulted in a mental breakdown."

(14)

Her novels are autobiographical, depicting her personal experiences of the problem of educated middle-class Indian women, and they are typically gender-specific [1].

The novelist Shashi Deshpande, winner of the Sahitya Academy Award, is interested in the projection of sorrows and sufferings, affliction and predicament, agony and anguish, suppression and exploitation of middle-class Indian women caught in the trap of Indian patriarchy. She expresses her concern for women who are irritated by conventional and established norms, beliefs, rituals, and conventions entrenched in Indian patriarchy. She raises her voice in protest of injustices perpetrated against women under the guise of gender discrimination [2]. She wants her female clients to be free of masculine ego and dominance. She wants them to defy laws, norms, and ideas imposed by others. She wants them to stand up for themselves and make their own choices.

Shashi Deshpande is noted for inventing contemporary female characters. Deshpande's female heroines, first as daughters, then as wives, are victims of the usual heinous gender prejudice. They are aware of the huge social disparity and

injustice that has been perpetrated on them, and they fight back against the repressive and unequal nature of the social standards and rules that limit their ability to be a wife. They dispute the subservient status imposed on them by society since they are bound to their duties in the family. Her sympathetic and accurate representation of Indian middle-class women has garnered her a lot of critical attention and appreciation [3]. Her deep compassion for women and their terrible situation is evident in all of her books and short stories.

The books of Shashi Deshpande are tense with a woman's self-awareness; an exploration of the feminine psyche and a grasp of life's riddles and the protagonist's place in it. Shashi Deshpande has revealed the unique and lonely situation of Indian women whose human rights are revoked by traditional society. Women's self-recognition and individuality are always marginalized in orthodox society because they are expected to be vassals. Feminism, according to Shashi Deshpande, is about women's emancipation not only legally but also socially. Women will not be able to recover from their marginalization until they are socially recognized as human beings. Even financially independent women are divided between traditionalism and modernization in their lives. Shashi Deshpande, an Indian, has painstakingly and emotionally described the Indian social system and the traditional rules imposed on its women.

Shashi Deshpande enjoys delving into the enigma of human behavior as it relates to the middle-class ethos. She makes contributions to Indian English writing, putting her in the canon. It gives readers hope in her narrative *Ships That Pass*, which initially appeared in *Eve's Weekly* in 1980. Instead of focusing on the characters, it depicts people and their mysterious selves. She was dissatisfied with her ability to form the true

essence of a tale in magazine serializations. She chooses to rewrite the story, Ships That Pass because it has lost its true core [4].

It is based on a full-fledged love story with a twist. The enigma of the human mind remains unchanged despite the passage of time. It is still the world's greatest mystery. When she was little, she was fascinated by mysteries and crimes.

In Ships That Pass, Shashi Deshpande explores the enigma of human relationships. She portrays a wide range of dimensions in her art, resulting in enigmatic components. In the Ships That Pass, she weaves a web of enigmatic features. Radhika is introduced as an immature next-generation girl who is mistaken for a working lady by her family members at the beginning of the novella.

Radhika's family persuades her to prepare for competitive exams such as the IAS when she graduates from college. They rationalize it by linking her employment status to her marital status [5]. They appear to believe that professional women have a distinguished place in society, but Radhika's dilemma reveals something else. Instead of considering a career, she considered marriage, whereas her companions had made plans for a certain career. Shashi Deshpande writes,

"As I was walking across the street behind Bombay University, constructing a spot I will recall, comparable to the Buddha's Peepal tree in Bodh Gaya-illumination came Disclosure." (9)

Shashi Deshpande portrays the intriguing side of a young man who makes a marriage decision while crossing the road. In Bodh Gaya, she imagines the road as Buddha's Peepal tree. Radhika, a young woman, has decided to marry just as she wants to go shopping, to a party, to see a movie, and so on. She is an educated young woman whose friend Rashmi aspires to pursue medical studies, and another friend Supriya plans to follow in her father's footsteps and become a lawyer. Shashi Deshpande exhibits a disparity of psychological levels of the same generation in this context.

At the beginning of the novel, Shashi Deshpande develops the mystical aspect. The reader struggles to comprehend Radhika's decision to marry, which she rejects, yet in the next paragraph, she refuses to wear a sari, which expresses herself in such a wonderful way.

"Will you wear a saree when they come?" Aai questioned. "They had come out of nowhere to become a huge power in my life, in our lives as a whole," I said. "Does that look like a sari?" I was prepared to play a young lady who was being "saw" by her true capacity in-law parents. What, on the other hand, can be stated about a sari? "No," I said emphatically.(12)

Another intriguing theme appears to be Radhika's decision to marry over her career and

her refusal to wear a saree. The connection between marriage and the protest of wearing a saree is perplexing. It's odd to think of an Indian civilization justifying a marriage without a sari. An Indian bride wears traditional attire. Concerning Radhika, Shashi Deshpande sprinkles the element of curiosity and builds the search for happening [6]. As the novella progresses, Tara and Shaan's relationship takes on a new hue that Radhika finds difficult to comprehend. Radhika is taken aback when she hears Shaan say, **"I have no effect over her at all."** (11) Radhika had seen them as a perfect couple since she was a child. Tara had given up all for Shaan to get married right away.

Radhika is taken aback by Shaan's reaction to her sister's hasty marriage. Shaan calls Radhika to notify her about Tara's condition, which appears to be far more mystical than it appears. Radhika decides to pay a visit to Tara's house to get answers to her questions. Radhika sets out to discover the truth as soon as she arrives at Tara's place. Tara tried her hardest to hide and keep everything regular, but minor details add to the mystery's intricacy. Shaan looks to be a caring and sincere husband, yet he fails to arrange for Tara's medical treatment.

Shaan teamed up with Rohini for an extramarital encounter as the narrative progressed. Shashi Deshpande describes Tara and Shaan's unusual and intriguing chemistry. It befuddles the couple's true relationship how a caring husband might have an extramarital affair. If he intends to deceive Tara, why does he call Radhika? Leave the riddle of Shaan's traits unanswered and move on to Tara's attributes. Shashi Deshpande elaborates on Tara's perplexity as a result of Geeta's death. Tara displayed psychological distress and the need for medical treatment in this episode. In a later episode, it is revealed in a

conversation with Radhika that she is suffering from sadness as a result of Geeta's death.

Tara is occasionally portrayed by Shashi Deshpande as a collected personality, as shown during the talk with Radhika over Geeta's death. At the beginning of the novella, her personality reflects a very talented and energetic woman. Shaan demonstrates that he is a kind husband who is mature enough to deal with Geeta's death without it becoming an issue between them. Her voice has a sense of finality and acceptance of reality. Despite her feelings for Geeta, she accepts the truth [7]. As a result, a new mystery emerges in the search for the cause of her illness. It combines the reader's prejudices about accepting Geeta's death with her sickness over Geeta's death. Shashi Deshpande displays Tara's maternal biases to an unusual level.

Tara's mental state can only be explained as a result of Geeta's death. She expresses her thanks to the deceased child Geeta while completely ignoring the living child Abhi. She has depicted a double standard of parenting in which one side despises Geeta's sensitive mother, while the other side exposes Abhi's stupidity. In both active and idle poses, Shashi Deshpande explores the characteristics of parenting. It presents the intriguing topic of how one character would treat his or her children differently. When Tara tells Shaan, **"She stated we don't deserve Abhi either, that we aren't suitable to be parents,"** it reveals another side of Tara. It becomes difficult to comprehend Tara's unique maternal qualities.

It investigates a new perspective of women's traits concerning Tara by diverging at several dimensions of Indian society. Tara is portrayed by Shashi Deshpande as a brilliant, beautiful, and intelligent young woman, and her married life is described as "wonderful" in the eyes of society. Then there's the way she leads to

mental anguish and a biased attitude toward her child. Tara, too, draws a veil of secrecy around her demise. Even in the last paragraph, it does not specify if she was murdered, committed suicide, or died naturally. Her death mystery has numerous dimensions, yet neither side moves forward. Shashi Deshpande creates beautiful suspense, yet it shatters in many dimensions, leaving the reader with a question mark.

The entire narrative is devoted to Tara or Tara's health, and the ending leaves the reader befuddled. Shashi Deshpande speculates about Tara's assassination, suicide, or natural death. Numerous clues point to Shaan as the perpetrator of her murder. Shaan may have murder in mind for Tara. He calls Radhika to look after her sister so that he may later project himself as an innocent and caring adventurous spouse. He has an extramarital romance with his next-door neighbor Rohini, which Radhika discovers later. He probably intends to marry Rohini. And Tara is well aware of the situation and may object. It could be the cause of Tara's illness, which is thought to be a reaction to Geetu's death. With the couple's squabble, Shaan may fade away. Because Shashi Deshpande has not given him a clean chit regarding Tara's death, he can proceed with her murder.

The enigma behind Shaan's character remains unsolved, leaving a question mark. Why does Shaan get arrested, and how does he get out of it? There is no explanation for Shaan's detention and subsequent release. It does a good job of keeping the legend alive. Tara's death took on a new meaning, leading her to commit suicide. Shashi Deshpande mingles and mangles Tara's death mystery. It will be easier to justify if it focuses on the second supposition of Tara's death. Tara's murder has only an assumption, which is part of Shashi Deshpande's mystery trait. Tara

deduces that the patient is mentally disturbed. Radhika is summoned by Shaan. Tara had attempted suicide twice, according to the report [8].

Tara appears to have forgotten how to enjoy life. She represses Geetu's death in her subconscious. It is speculated that she commits suicide to alleviate her guilt. She may believe that there is only one way to recover from the trauma. Tara had tried enough to get back on track, but she was imprisoned in mental turmoil again in the next episode. It could be a motive to intervene in Tara's death. Shashi Deshpande creates a new episode based on Tara's death. Her death seemed to be the result of neither murder nor suicide. She could die as a result of natural causes. It already recognizes her as a suffering candidate who can only find relief through death [9].

It's no surprise that she died. She has never shown any complicity in her life. She oscillates between life and death regularly. Her death was primarily caused by her health. It can speculate about murder or suicide, but no one will benefit from her death. It raises the probability of her passing away naturally. Shashi Deshpande weaves a labyrinth of theories around Tara's death. The thread of assumption is in the reader's grasp, ready to be dragged or lost. In the final chapter of the novella, Shashi Deshpande exposes another curiosity of Radhika, who is married to Ram Mohan. It does not exhibit any chemistry between them. In truth, Radhika did not initially display any sort of affection for Ram Mohan.

They have a regular relationship with each other, just like any other human person. Their age gap has foreshadowed nothing that will occur in the future [10].

Radhika is already engaged to Ghanshyam, and her feelings for him are quite

strong. As this interaction demonstrates, she does not greet Ram Mohan even in a pleasant manner.

"Please allow me to finish the presentation if it is not too much difficulty. As you might have guessed, Radhika is my sister. Radhika is Tara's younger sister. You referred to him as Ram's uncle in the past. I had this crazy concept that I could never refer to him as Ram's uncle. Looking up at him gave me the impression that it would give me a neck cramp. I felt like a bazaar overshadowed person, a small individual. He didn't strike me as particularly frightening." (18)

This chat elucidates Radhika's perspective on Ram Mohan. This is an introductory communication that has nothing to do with their being frightening. The entire story is based on everyday communication, with nothing glistening between them. Ram Mohan only assists Radhika to discover the mystery surrounding her sister's death. They meet with the selective idea of investigating Tara's death and gathering proof. Shashi Deshpande alters their traditional marriage relationship [11]. This study draws attention to their feelings.

They show a happily married couple after this piece. The mystery behind Radhika's marriage has numerous layers, according to Shashi Deshpande. An engaged girl pays a visit to her sister's residence and becomes involved in the investigation of Tara's death. Her engagement ends for no apparent reason, and she marries Ram Mohan. Who she used to refer to as uncle, and the age gap evaporates in a flash someplace. The entire marital scene arouses a great deal of curiosity and perplexity in the minds of the readers. Shashi Deshpande shows the various parts of allusion to the female mind in a reformed manner near the finish. All of the figures are in

allusion [12], which depicts the modern human psyche's estrangement and allusion in society, wonderfully weaving the web of relationships.

Rather than society, the characters are stifled by their thought processes. It causes difficulty for the character as they study their life's mystic thoughts. Finally, it may be concluded that the recognition of females is not a concern by society, including family which is expressed in *Ships That Pass*, a riddle of the human mind in the context of today's isolated civilization.

Conclusion

Shashi Deshpande's works portray the sorrow and turmoil of modern educated middle-class women in a realistic manner. On the one hand, patriarchal and tradition, and on the other, self-expression, individualism, and independence. Deshpande mostly cares about and sympathizes with the woman. She has shared her anxieties, sorrows, disappointments, and frustrations openly and honestly. The author exposed several levels of oppression, including sexual oppression, in addition to portraying the woman's struggle for self-respect and self-identity. Although Shashi Deshpande's novels are primarily focused on middle-class women, she also addresses the difficulties of lower-class women. Shashi Deshpande has embarked on a journey by making women the protagonists of her writings. It's an exciting and heartbreaking trip since it entails portraying the challenges that women face without exaggerating them, ensuring that the novels remain objective accounts of women's hardships and sorrows. She puts the current Indian situation in the proper context. Shashi Deshpande succeeds in conveying the condition of Indian women by remaining true to her convictions. Shashi Deshpande's motivation for revealing patriarchal schemes to oppress women

reveals her sincere desire for women to be awakened. Shashi Deshpande's ultimate goal is to bring the ladies out of their enslaved prisons and into liberated countries where liberty reigns supreme.

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