



SILENT RESISTANCE: PATRIARCHY AND EMOTIONAL SUPPRESSION IN “THE INTRUSION”

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ABSTRACT

The story, centered on an unnamed protagonist's traumatic wedding night, serves as a microcosm for the transition of women from paternal to marital authority within an arranged marriage system. This article employs feminist literary theory to analyze Shashi Deshpande's short story "The Intrusion," arguing that it is a critical expose of how patriarchal structures enforce female subjugation through the systematic suppression of emotion. The analysis focuses on the protagonist's internal conflict, where her conditioned compliance battles her innate terror and revulsion. This study contends that Deshpande transcends a mere depiction of violation by illuminating the protagonist's silent, internal resistance as a significant, though nascent, form of agency. By mapping the architecture of her emotional suppression—the internalized guilt, the enforced silence and the spatial alienation—the paper reveals the story's deeper commentary on the psychological colonization inherent in patriarchal practices.

Key words: Patriarchy, Emotional Suppression, Agency, Violation, Interiority

INTRODUCTION

Shashi Deshpande is recognized as a major writer in the field of postcolonial English literature of India, who has gained her place mainly through the representation of the inner life of middle-class women

without any hesitation. Her novels are very carefully drawn to show the very small crises that happen in the houses, which is a place that is usually not only romanticized but also where Deshpande shows the

greatest part of patriarchy's power. The story "The Intrusion" from her debut collection *The Legacy* is a very powerful and succinct example of her work. By getting rid of the social customs around the wedding celebrations, Deshpande throws a harsh light on the point where the abstract tradition becomes real, personal and physically imposed: the wedding night of an arranged marriage.

The strength of the narrative and its ongoing importance are mainly due to its simple but strong and still very much protagonist's mental state. "The Intrusion" is thus a narrative about an unsettling marital initiation, through the lens of marital rape, but at the same time it is a really deep inquiry into the power of patriarchal control. It focuses particularly on the very patriarchal system that channels and at the same time, suppresses female emotions—fear, disgust, wrath, and lust—in order to create ardent. The protagonist's mental talk is the place where the social norms are in conflict with the individual sensitivity. It is going to be the case that Deshpande, by labeling the act as an "intrusion," is raising the voice of the frustration with a system that puts a stamp on the personal boundary violations. Moreover, it will contend that the image of suppression carries the resistance's seed; her

dismal, adamant internal conflict is a non-verbal sign of the withdrawal from the emotional consent that signals the start of the difficult yet crucial awakening.

RESEARCH GAP

The existing literature engaged in the discussion about "The Intrusion" by Shashi Deshpande has clearly illuminated its aspects through and through. among them being the themes of patriarchal violation and female alienation within the context of arranged marriage (Jain 212; Bhalla 137). But still, there is a considerable gap between the detailed analysis of emotional suppression as a systematic patriarchal tool and the interpretation of silent interiority as nascent agency. Up to now, critics have mostly considered the protagonist's fear and internal conflict as manifestations of oppression, not paying close attention to the textual mechanisms—such as the specific internalized guilt and self-policing dialogue—that secure her compliance, a process that is in line with feminist theories of docility (Moi 59). Besides that, while depiction of her victimization is predominant, the agential strength of her constant inner resistance is frequently under-theorized. Her very fearfulness and non-internalization of the marital script could be seen as a kind of silent protest through the

maintained consciousness, a notion that Deshpande has acknowledged but not fully applied to this particular story (Singh 98). This research paper destructively criticizes that gap, as it provides a detailed classification of suppression and at the same time, re-frames her internal monologue not as passive suffering but as the critical, foundational stage of a resistant feminist awareness.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This research article primarily aims to perform a close literary study of Shashi Deshpande's short story "The Intrusion" with the support of the feminist literary theory and the first step would be to go through the author's explicit narrative to find her implicit criticism of the male-dominated society. The specific target of this research will be to analyze in detail the process through which the arranged marriage institution operates as a transfer of power over a woman and her rights and to reveal the exact means—like internal conditioning, no talking and physical separation—that her feelings are made unresponsive and thus, obedient. It will also aim to disclose the conflict of the story's central symbol that the "intrusion" is both a literal deprivation of physical space and a metaphor of psychological integrity, arguing that the

opposite occurs on two levels. The separation of silent resistance in the protagonist's awareness, which is usually neglected, will be a focal point of the research, as it will be claimed that her constant internal strife and her unwillingness to surrender emotionally are the signs of a gradually growing, non-verbal and very significant forms of power assertion and feminist consciousness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is based on a qualitative research design that reveals the tools of literary criticism and textual analysis. The main methodological procedure is a detailed reading of Shashi Deshpande's short story "The Intrusion," which is the basic text for generating and backing up the paper's arguments. This intricate reading will be systematically steered by the guidelines of feminist literary theory, an approach that, as Elaine Showalter suggests, aims to "analyze women's writing and the representation of women in literature from a consciously political standpoint" (Showalter 249). This theoretical view is vital for unraveling the story's presentation of gender relations, power hierarchy and the making—and silencing—of female voice. To support this argument further, insights from

psychoanalytic feminism will be used to investigate the main character’s inner struggle, seeing how patriarchal standards are absorbed and become a limiting superego and how her true wants and fears are pushed down (Moi 9). Moreover, the method includes a spatial literary analysis to untangle the meaning of the story’s locales—the “strange” room, house and bed—understanding these as the physical embodiments of the heroine’s displacement and imprisonment in a male-dominated world, a method frequently pointed out in critiques of Deshpande’s suffocating domestic settings (Singh 95). The methodology will scrutinize narrative components in detail, such as the first-person interior monologue that gives the reader exclusive access to the protagonist’s mind; carefully chosen words and images that express invasion and estrangement; and the large role silence plays, both as a narrative device and a thematic concern.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Shashi Deshpande’s “The Intrusion” is a masterclass in narrative economy, using the confined setting of a single night to stage a profound confrontation between the self and a suffocating social order. Through a meticulous deployment of point of view, symbolism and a stark linguistic palette,

Deshpande dissects the patriarchal machinery of arranged marriage and its devastating psychological fallout. The analysis reveals that the story’s power resides not merely in its depiction of a traumatic event, but in its forensic examination of how female subjectivity is systematically disciplined through internalized control and spatial domination, while simultaneously registering the irrepressible, if silent, resistance of an authentic consciousness.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF CONTROL: INTERNALIZATION AND SPATIAL DOMINATION

The author Deshpande spins a tale in which the male-dominated system of power is not only an outside force but also a reality that women have come to accept. The psyche of the main character is divided among the social commandments that impose their rule over her and her inner being that goes against the authority. The author gives the reader a deep insight into the heroine's mind through a ceaseless internal dialogue that reflects her submission to the rules. She is in fact, very much aware of her fear and still scolds it as if it were her own child saying, "Don't be an idiot... It is a common occurrence. Every woman has to go through it. Why are you so scared?" (Deshpande). This is not the heroine's real

self but instead, it is the voice of the patriarchal society which has been internalized by her— an inner critic molded through a long period of conditioning that likens marital devotion to meekness, a process to which feminist critics attribute the retention of gendered power (Moi 58). The guilt that follows her ("He must think her a fool") serves as a medium of self-surveillance, making sure that she does not express and release the very natural feelings of disgust and fright that she is experiencing. This intra-psychic territorialization is reflected in the powerful spatial imagery of the tale. The heroine is in fact very much uprooted and lost in a "strange house" and a "strange bed," a repetition that brings out her complete alienation (Deshpande). The location is not of his liking; it is his territory, a place where he walks around with "quiet assurance." It has been remarked by academics that Deshpande often represents domestic spaces as prisons and this time, the bedroom has been transformed to be the epicenter of purging the patriarchy—a site where the private self is publicly and legally violable (Jain 212). The bed which has been a classic representation of intimacy and comfort in marriage, turns nightmarishly into the altar of sacrifice and the site of horror, thereby, unmasking the horror of the marital contract perversion. This

demonstrates the mutual interaction between the mental and the material, revealing how patriarchal space ultimately encroaches upon and colonizes the mind.

THE DUALITY OF VIOLATION AND THE GRAMMAR OF SILENT RESISTANCE

The main metaphor of the story, the "intrusion," works on two inseparable and mutually reinforcing levels. One level is the literal, physical intrusion. Deshpande's depiction of the sexual act is remarkably clinical and savage, devoid of any pretense for mutual desire or love. It is expressed through a vocabulary of imposition and objectification: "his hand on her shoulder... pulling her towards him," "his body over hers" (Deshpande). The words are of one-sided action performed upon a motionless object, depicting not fulfillment but annexation—a claiming of territory acknowledged by a social contract. However, this action is the trigger for the second violation, which is more profound, that is, the psychological intrusion of an entire ideological system into the innermost part of her being. The presumption her husband makes that she will not only submit physically but also alter her emotional response—suppressing fear and disgust to play the role of the accepting wife—parallel her psychological integrity violation. This

double intrusion is what the critic Amrita Bhalla calls the story's main tragedy: "the reduction of a person to a function within a patriarchal economy" (Bhalla 137).

Nevertheless, in the total subjection description, Deshpande gives birth to a powerful, non-verbal power. The resistance here is not verbal or active; it is ontological and is in the unyielding reality of her inner self. Even though her body obeys, her mind does not surrender. She continuously and frantically records her lack of consent in her thoughts. She does not sugarcoat or tolerate the act; she continues to narrate her internal horror and disconnection. This is what Toril Moi, drawing on Simone de Beauvoir, might call an assertion of "immanence"—the lived, bodily reality of experience—against the patriarchal "transcendence" imposed upon her (Moi 95). The story's end is critical: she is lying quietly, listening to his breathing, and feeling the moonlight. This is not calmness, but a disintegrated and keen awareness. The torture is over, but she is always a different person. This silent and lonely aftermath moment that Sunaina Singh points out in Deshpande's works, often signals "the painful birth of a new consciousness" (Singh 101). Her silence, thus, is not only the silence of a victim but also the thick, loaded silence of a witness

and recorder of an enormous injustice. It is the honesty of a real self that, although broken, has not been wiped out, thus preparing the ground for a very difficult but still possible journey towards reclaiming one's self in the future. In this way, Deshpande gives a devastating critique of systemic oppression and at the same time, a testament to the resilient flicker of individual consciousness.

CONCLUSION

"The Intrusion" by Shashi Deshpande, a short psychological story gives a very strong criticism of the masculine society prevailing at that time allowing personal violations. To some extent, the narrative elaborates on how and to what extent the emotional suppression through the combined effects of internalized conditioning and spatial alienation makes the women acquiescent. But on the other hand, by focusing on the protagonist's indomitable consciousness, Deshpande recognizes the inner reality of the character. The silent resistance of the character, the maintained sense of violation, and the final realization have formed a non-verbal agency, that is, the integrity of a genuine self. In this light, the tale is both a loud condemnation of the oppressive system and a confirmation of the surviving bright part of

individual consciousness that is now a little less awakened but still there, marking a painful but indispensable awakening.

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