

ANALYSING JAYA'S INDIVIDUATION PROCESS IN "THAT LONG SILENCE" BY SHASHI DESPANDE

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ABSTRACT

The present paper entitles,Analysing Jaya's Individuation process in "That Long Silence" by Shashi Despande explores the individuation process of the protagonist Jaya. She is forced to strictly fulfil her role in maintaining the family's traditions and is not acknowledged as a human being with a unique identity who has dutifully complied with male supremacy. The fact remains that there is still a gender gap, despite numerous attempts to free women from male oppression. In Indian society, women face numerous challenges in their homes, workplaces, and communities. She experience psychological distress, stress, and exposure to a range of problems like identity loss, dominance by men, and marital discord. Many female writers come out to voice their fears, emphasizing their feelings of marginalization and rebelling against the world that is dominated by men. One of the well-known modern Indian novelists, Shashi Deshpande, made a sincere effort to expose submissive women in her writing. This essay aims to show how Deshpande appears to be expressing a crucial truth—namely, that women can take charge of their lives and make positive changes in them if they are resolved to speak out against oppression and break the taboo of silence—through the character Jaya in That Long Silence.

KEYWORDS: Individuation, self-growth, oppression, conscious, identity.

INTRODUCTION

Women continue to be suppressed at all ages. They often don't have a voice or an individual identity of their own. Men start to dictate to women how they should act and behave. They've been instructed to be. To fit in with society, one must be traditional, obedient, and docile. They are driven to act in a specific, stereotypical manner in order to uphold male dominance. In a hierarchical social framework, they are assigned a position under men. Men govern and control them, and women are only the objects of this domination and reign. Serving is the primary reason for their existence as a mother, wife, sister, or daughter of someone. These gender normative stereotypes have duties that society has allocated to them. Individuation is a central concept in the psychological theories of Carl Gustav Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who founded analytical psychology. Individuation refers to the process of becoming the person one is meant to be, of realizing and fulfilling one's true potential and unique self.

One of the well-known modern Indian novelists writing in English is Shashi Deshpande. She is a renowned novelist who has won numerous awards and has a profound understanding of the minds of Indian middle-class women. In *That Long Silence*, the issue of identity crisis is raised right away. When the heroine states that the words come to her easily, it presents an extremely interesting problem because self-revelation is a painful process. "The real you" never comes out for her. Her writings portray contemporary Indian women's quest for self-definition, societal acceptance, and essential relationships for women. She has penned over a dozen fictional works, and she has done a great job of capturing the genuine feelings of Indian women. She discusses the struggles and plight of middle-class Indian women in her writing. In 1978, she released her debut book of short stories. Her book *That Long Silence* earned her the Sahitya Academy Award. Her books depict a social environment with intricate connections.

Simone de Beauvoir wrote in her book *The Second Sex*, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." This quote emphasizes how gender stereotypes are socially constructed, placing women below men in a hierarchical social structure that is run and controlled by men (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 330). Beauvoir proposed—while acknowledging the biological distinctions between the sexes—that women are only made into women by the environments in which they are born, grow up, and survive. In this social identity construction, man defines woman not in herself but in reference to him, and humanity is one with the male. Women are thereby relegated to the status of the "Other." In our society, women are expected to be submissive.

Women get lost in the deep chasm of family entanglements and lose their sense of self. They are kept under control and suppressed by a set of rules and guidelines. They face discrimination from the beginning of their lives until the very end. In her book *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande portrays the lives of difficult and traumatized women in an Indian middle-class family. The protagonist of the book is Jaya, a sensitive, intelligent, middle-class housewife who must remain silent her entire life in order to conform to patriarchal social norms. She finally decides to break her "long silence" and express her true self through writing because she is tired of the drudgery and boredom of this rigid familial entanglement. By doing this, she hopes to reclaim her long-lost identity, which has been suppressed for a long time in a restrictive and exploitative social structure that does not allow any space for women.

"A pair of bullocks yoked together... A man and a woman married for seventeen years. A couple with two children. A family somewhat like the one caught and preserved for posterity by the advertising visuals I so loved. But the reality was only this. We were two persons. A man. A woman". (8)

Sarita is also indoctrinated from an early age to adhere to the social norms that all girls in the society are expected to follow in order to fulfil their ultimate goal of marriage. She is instructed to get ready to conform to the strict standards of this male-dominated society, or standards that the older women have self-created. All girls have to guard their physical beauty in order to fit in with

the right kind of boy. Sarita is instructed to heed it. She is advised against going in direct sunlight for fear of changing the color of her skin. However, she ignores it because, like all little girls, she doesn't get it. Consequently, she receives a mild reprimand from her mother. She learns that she can never win her father's house. She is only allowed to stay there for a predetermined amount of time before having to leave because she will be sent to live with her in-laws indefinitely and can only call that house her own.

“Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too – as much of it as we can stand. This means open conflict and open collaboration at once.” (*ibid, para 288*)

Jung (1935) emphasized that the integration of collective and personal elements is necessary for individuation. The neurotic condition is characterized by the denial of the collective, the psychotic condition by the denial of the personal, and the ego may be overwhelmed by archetypal inflation. According to Jung, this aspect of the psyche is collective in that each person experiences the forms and images in a different way, but they all seem to be shared by people from all walks of life. It is "objective" in the sense that it seems to exist independently of psychological phenomena that are unique to each individual.

“Actually, my name isn't Jaya all. Not now, I mean. It's Suhasini.'... It's the name Mohan gave me when we got married” (15).

Her father had given her the name Jaya when she was born. The name Jaya is a symbol of triumph. Her father instilled in her a constant sense of confidence, bravery, boldness, and victory. Her father instilled in her the belief that she would always prevail in any situation. Sending her to Oxford was his dream. He instilled independence in her. His untimely death somehow crushed her dreams. She was suddenly treated equally to all other women who shared the desire to have children and become wives. Jaya transforms into Suhasini, a completely different person from the brave Jaya.

According to Jungian psychology, an individual is therefore drawn in three different directions: first, by his or her own conservative ego, which seeks to maintain the psychic status quo; second, by the personal "shadow," or unconscious or repressed aspects of the psyche, which are typically at odds with the conscious ego attitude; and third, by the individual's own unconscious, repressed, or unconscious elements of the psyche (Jung, 1956c).

“Stay at Home, look after your babies, keep out the rest of the world, and you're safe. The poor idiotic woman Suhasini believed in this. I know better now. I know that safety is unattainable. You're never safe.” (17)

Jaya describes how, following her marriage, she had made Mohan the center of her existence. For her, Mohan's preferences were all that were important. She attempted to substitute Mohan's dreams

for her own. She wanted to portray the parts of Sita, Gandhari, or Savitri, the ideal traditional Indian wives. But to Mohan, all of her efforts were meaningless. He was a materialistic individual who only cared about wealth, status, and worldly success. Jaya persisted in her never-ending waiting, believing that eventually everything would get better.

“But for women the waiting game starts early in childhood. Wait until you get married. Wait until your husband comes. Wait until you go to you in laws’ home. Wait until you have kids. Yes, ever since I got married, I had done nothing but wait. Waiting for Mohan to come home, waiting for the children to be born, for them to start school, waiting for them to come home, waiting for the milk, the servant, the lunch-carrier man...” (30)

Jaya kept suppressing her will and her desires. She was well aware of the value of marriage and the role that families play. Jaya makes every effort to provide for her husband's comforts. She makes an effort to act like a traditional wife—submissive and subservient. Even in her writing, she strives to please her husband. Consequently, a few of her stories are turned down. Kamat recommended that she include her own perspective. He asks her to let go of her rage.

“Have you ever heard of an angry young woman? ...A woman can never be angry; she can only be neurotic, hysterical, frustrated... there’s no room for despair, either. There’s only order and routine—today, I have to change the sheets; tomorrow, scrub the bathrooms; the day after clean the fridge...” (147-148).

Every unspoken experience in a relationship adds a brick, and if it is not addressed in a timely manner, it eventually takes the form of a wall. Jaya should follow Mohan's lead in her thoughts as well. He disapproves and discourages her writing on a regular basis. Jaya is never the complainer. However, when Mohan is accused of malpractice in his office, things get complicated. Jaya is embarrassed by what happened. Mohan disrespects Jaya and then departs from the house. Jaya is engrossed in depression. She begins to examine her own position as a wife. While identification is a process that never ends, it can produce experiences that give the impression that a goal has been reached for a brief period of time.

“There is no linear evolution; there is only circumambulation of the self. Uniform development exists, at most, only at the beginning; later everything points towards the centre.” (*Jung 1961, p. 188*)

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“The realization that I am lost overwhelms me, Worse—I do not know where I am, where I have to go and how I can find him. The disorientation is total... I continue to lie there, paralyzed, aphasic... I realize that... we will never be able to make it...” (86)

Inside, she felt empty, alone, and abandoned. She believed that all she had accomplished in life was failure—she had failed as a wife, mother, writer, and lover. Her feminine psyche began to burn with a fierce rage for having so steadfastly shaped herself to meet Mohan's demands over the years. “What was I left with now? Nothing. Just emptiness and silence” (144).

The only feelings they were able to effectively communicate with one another were flippant accusations, anguish, irritation, and deadly anger. She had nothing to offer him in exchange for all the responsibilities he was placing on her. Jaya was limited to her endurance. “Suhasini was dead. Yes that was it....I'd killed her... We had killed her between us, Mohan and I” (121).

The expectations Jaya had from her tradition-bound husband are what caused her to feel depressed and disappointed in the end. Their marital issues and incompatibilities are the result of her repressed anger, which manifests itself as silence and a lack of communication. Jaya makes the decision to break her protracted silence. She makes the decision to reclaim her happiness, mental stability, and inner serenity.

“I'm not afraid any more. The panic has gone” (191).

“To plug that ‘hole in the heart’, I will have to speak, to listen, I will have to erase the silence between us” (192).

Kusum, Nayna, Manda, Jeeja, Tara, Vimla, and Mohan's mother are among the other female characters in the book who likewise make concessions and endure hardships in the name of marriage. Throughout the book, Deshpande carefully examines the so-called institution of marriage and the man-woman relationship. She gives instances of everyday women who come from the middle class and lower social classes. She portrays marriage as akin to servitude. Deshpande advises her women to resist giving in to the master-slave dynamic instead.

“Individuation is a heroic and often tragic task, the most difficult of all, it involves suffering, a passion of the ego: the ordinary empirical man we once were is burdened with the fate of losing himself in a greater dimension and being robbed of his fancied freedom of will. He suffers, so to speak, from the violence done to him by the self.” (1942a, para. 233)

Jung's concept of individuation is a holistic process that goes beyond traditional notions of personal development. It's a journey toward wholeness, involving the integration of unconscious elements, the confrontation of the shadow, and the realization of one's unique and authentic self.

“We don't change overnight. It's possible that we may not change even over long periods of time. But we can always hope. Without that, life would be impossible. And if there is anything I know now it is this: life has always to be made possible.” (193)

The Divine Understanding of the Almighty has given our souls strength. We have an obligation to choose what is best for ourselves. Speaking the truth ought not to be stopped because of concern for the consequences of one's words. Deshpande attempts to convey in all of her works the need for women to recognize and embrace their own roles and responsibilities. They have to take responsibility and carry out their fair share. It is always so simple to assign blame to other people. However, they ought to consider the extent to which they have enabled their own victimization rather than taking this action.

"The self is relatedness... The self only exists inasmuch as you appear. Not that you are, but that you do the self. The self appears in your deeds and deeds always mean relationship." (*Jung 1935-39, p. 73*)

"Silence is a form of abetment," claims Deshpande (personal communication, October 10, 2015). Deshpande suggests that women should speak up and not allow themselves to be victims, while also blaming the patriarchal system for forcing women to remain silent. She exhorts her women to emerge from the wall of silence. Shashi Deshpande delivers her entire message to society in the novel's opening line.

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