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NEGOTIATING REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE: A PSYCHOANALYTIC-MARXIST STUDY OF SASHE DESHPANDE'S SELECTIVE NOVELS (*THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS*, *THAT LONG SILENCE*, *ROOTS AND SHADOWS*)

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Abstract

This study examined repression and resistance in Shashi Deshpande's selected novels, The Dark Holds No Terrors, That Long Silence, and Roots and Shadows, through a psychoanalytic-Marxist framework. The study focused on how patriarchal ideology shaped female identity through family, marriage, tradition, social respectability, and gendered moral codes. Using qualitative textual analysis, the research interpreted Saru, Jaya, and Indu as women whose private suffering was deeply connected with social structures that trained them into silence, obedience, guilt, and self-denial. Althusser's concept of ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses was used to analyze how institutions such as family, marriage, and culture reproduced women's subordination, while Freud's theory of repression and neurosis helped explain the psychological effects of this subordination. The findings showed that Deshpande's women were not passive victims; their resistance emerged gradually through memory, self-reflection, writing, and questioning of inherited values. Saru's confrontation with marital violence, Jaya's attempt to break her long silence, and Indu's struggle against family tradition revealed that resistance in Deshpande's fiction was slow, painful, and internally conflicted. The study concluded that Deshpande's novels exposed patriarchy as both a social and psychological force, showing how oppression entered women's minds while also creating the conditions for self-awareness and agency.

Keywords: Shashi Deshpande, repression, resistance, psychoanalytic Marxism, patriarchy, female identity

Introduction

Shashi Deshpande's fiction occupies an important place in Indian English literature because it presents women not as flat victims of patriarchy, but as thinking, wounded, resisting, and self-questioning individuals. Her novels often move through domestic spaces, marital relationships, family structures, inherited customs, and middle-class social codes, yet these spaces are never merely private. They become sites where power is produced, repeated, and internalized. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *That Long Silence*, and *Roots and Shadows*, Deshpande presents women who appear to live ordinary lives, but beneath that ordinariness there is a continuing pressure of fear, silence, guilt, social duty, and emotional hunger. These novels make visible how women are shaped by the family, marriage, motherhood, sexuality, class position, and cultural expectations. At the same time, they also show how women begin to question the roles assigned to them, even when that questioning brings pain, isolation, or psychological conflict (Deshpande, 1980, 1983, 1989).

In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Sarita's struggle is rooted in the unequal treatment she receives as a daughter, wife, and professional woman. Her success as a doctor does not free her from gendered humiliation; rather, it disturbs the patriarchal balance of her marriage. The violence she faces within marriage is not shown as an isolated personal tragedy but as the result of a social structure that cannot tolerate female authority. Sarita's return to her parental home becomes a movement into memory, fear, and self-examination. Her psychological suffering is closely tied to the social rules that have shaped her since childhood: the preference for the male child, the demand for female sacrifice, and the belief that a woman must adjust even when adjustment destroys her sense of self (Deshpande, 1980). Through Sarita, Deshpande shows that repression is not simply silence imposed from outside; it also becomes a voice inside the woman that blames, controls, and weakens her.

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That Long Silence presents another form of repression through the character of Jaya, whose married life is built around quiet submission. Jaya's silence is not emptiness; it is a dense psychological condition created by years of compromise. She has learned to perform the role of a good wife by suppressing her anger, her writing, and her selfhood. Mohan's expectations do not always appear as open violence, but they function through emotional control and social respectability. Jaya's crisis begins when the safe structure of marriage is shaken, and she is forced to examine the life she has accepted. Her silence, therefore, becomes both a symptom of repression and the starting point of resistance. Deshpande uses Jaya's inner reflections to show how patriarchal ideology does not always need physical force; it often works through approval, shame, fear of scandal, and the training of women to measure themselves through male comfort (Deshpande, 1989). This makes the novel highly relevant for a psychoanalytic-Marxist reading, because Jaya's inner conflict cannot be separated from the social ideology that has shaped her identity.

Roots and Shadows focuses on Indu, who returns to her ancestral home and confronts the structures of family, inheritance, caste-conscious morality, and gendered obedience. Indu's struggle is different from Sarita's and Jaya's, but it is part of the same wider pattern. She wants freedom, yet she is tied to the claims of family and tradition. Her resistance is not simple rebellion; it is troubled, hesitant, and full of contradictions. She questions the old order, but she also recognizes how deeply that order lives within her own thinking. In this sense, Indu's search for identity shows how ideology survives not only through external pressure but also through emotional attachment to family and tradition (Deshpande, 1983). The novel offers a sharp view of how women inherit not only property disputes and family histories, but also silence, obedience, fear, and moral burden.

Indian feminist criticism has often argued that the experience of Indian women cannot be fully explained through Western feminist models alone, because Indian women's subjectivity is shaped by family, caste, religion, class, and social honor in specific ways (Ramzan & Javaid, 2025; Tharu & Lalitha, 1991). Deshpande's novels support this view because her female characters do not simply reject the family or marriage as abstract institutions. Instead, they struggle within these structures, trying to create space for selfhood without fully escaping the emotional claims of belonging (Ramzan & Khan, 2024). Chitnis (1993) also argues that Indian feminism often seeks to renegotiate family and marriage rather than merely destroy them. This point is relevant to Deshpande because Sarita, Jaya, and Indu are not written as women outside society; they are women caught inside its strongest institutions. Their resistance begins when they start seeing these institutions as constructed, unequal, and damaging.

The research problem addressed in this study is that Deshpande's selected novels have frequently been read through feminist and psychological perspectives, but a combined psychoanalytic-Marxist reading allows a more layered understanding of how repression is socially produced and psychologically experienced. The selected novels reveal that patriarchy works not only by restricting women's actions, but also by shaping their desires, fears, and self-images. The protagonists resist, but their resistance carries emotional costs. They are not instantly liberated; rather, they pass through guilt, self-doubt, alienation, and inner division. This study therefore examines repression and resistance as connected processes, not as separate themes.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine how patriarchal laws, family traditions, marital expectations, and cultural taboos produce repression in the lives of Sarita, Jaya, and Indu.
- To analyze how social institutions such as family, marriage, religion, and class-based respectability operate as ideological forces in the selected novels.

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- To explore how repression produces resistance and psychological repercussions, including silence, anxiety, guilt, identity conflict, and emotional fragmentation.

Research Questions

1. How do patriarchal customs, social taboos, and familial expectations produce repression in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *That Long Silence*, and *Roots and Shadows*?
2. In what ways do ideological institutions such as family, marriage, and culture shape the female protagonists' identities and resistance?
3. How does psychological repression lead to emotional conflict, silence, guilt, or neurosis in the selected novels of Shashi Deshpande?

Literature Review

Existing scholarship on Shashi Deshpande largely places her among the major Indian English women novelists who write about the inner and social struggles of middle-class women. Critics have repeatedly observed that her fiction grows out of ordinary domestic life, but it does not remain limited to domestic description. It questions how family, marriage, motherhood, caste consciousness, social respectability, and gendered morality shape female identity. Singh (2018), Chaudhuri (2017), and K. Sharma (2019) discuss Deshpande's literary position by linking her education, social awareness, and writing career with her serious engagement with Indian women's lives. Similarly, Das (2021) and Mishra (2018) note that her narratives focus on educated women who are outwardly functional but inwardly divided by social expectations, personal desires, and emotional deprivation.

A strong body of criticism reads Deshpande as a feminist writer, though her feminism is often seen as culturally grounded rather than directly borrowed from Western models. Nayar (2019) and Joshi (2020) argue that Deshpande's fiction does not present women merely as helpless sufferers; instead, it shows them as thinking subjects who gradually become aware of the structures that restrict them. S. Sharma (2019) also observes that Deshpande exposes unequal man-woman relationships by presenting the emotional and moral pressures placed on women inside the family. This view is supported by Chopra (2018), Sengupta (2017), and Bose (2020), who see Deshpande's work as part of post-independence Indian English fiction where women's writing begins to challenge fixed gender roles without completely separating itself from Indian social and cultural realities.

Several scholars have also stressed that Indian women's writing must be read within its own historical and cultural background (Ahmad et al., 2022). Tharu and Lalitha (1991) argue that Indian women's experiences cannot be fully understood through Western feminist assumptions because Indian society is shaped by caste, religion, class, family honor, and colonial history. Chitnis (1993) makes a related point by explaining that Indian feminism often seeks to reform and renegotiate institutions such as marriage and family rather than simply reject them. This argument is useful for reading Deshpande because her female characters, especially Sarita, Jaya, and Indu, do not simply escape patriarchy. They struggle inside its structures, and their resistance remains emotionally tied to the very institutions that repress them.

Critical work on *The Dark Holds No Terrors* often focuses on Sarita's psychological suffering, marital violence, and fractured identity. The novel has been read as a study of how a woman's professional success becomes threatening within a male-centered marriage. Deshpande (1980) presents Sarita as a doctor who gains social respect outside the home but faces humiliation and sexual violence within marriage. Critics such as Radhakrishnan (2017), Pandey (2019), and Dass (2018) connect such female suffering with the larger pattern of patriarchal control in Indian middle-class life. Sharma et al. (2021) also point out that patriarchal culture produces psychological pain among women, which is clearly reflected in

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Sarita's fear, guilt, and return to the past. The novel, therefore, has been studied not only as a feminist text but also as a psychological narrative of trauma and self-recognition.

That Long Silence has received major critical attention because of its treatment of silence as both oppression and resistance. Jaya's silence is not a simple absence of speech; it is a learned social behavior created by marriage, respectability, and fear of disturbing the family order. Deshpande (1989) presents Jaya as an educated woman and writer who suppresses her creative voice to fit the role expected from a wife. Goffman's (1959) idea of social performance is relevant here because Jaya performs the acceptable role of wife while hiding her private anger and disappointment. De Beauvoir (1949) also helps explain how women are made secondary within male-defined social structures. In this sense, Jaya's silence is a socially produced condition, but her later self-reflection becomes a movement toward self-awareness and speech.

Roots and Shadows has generally been discussed in relation to identity, tradition, inheritance, and the conflict between modern education and family authority. Deshpande (1983) presents Indu as a woman who returns to her ancestral family and confronts the power of custom, property, caste-based morality, and gendered obedience. Lakshmi and Arvinda (2017) examine whether Deshpande's women truly assert themselves or compromise their assertion for survival, and this question fits Indu's position closely. She resists the suffocating claims of tradition, yet she cannot cut herself off completely from family memory and emotional belonging. Sambharwal and Yadav (2022) also appreciate Deshpande's portrayal of female sensibility, especially her ability to present women's needs, frustrations, hopes, and suppressed desires without reducing them to stereotypes.

The psychoanalytic dimension in Deshpande criticism has focused on repression, neurosis, guilt, anxiety, and the return of suppressed memories. Freud's theory of repression explains how desires or fears rejected by social morality are pushed into the unconscious but continue to disturb the subject through symptoms and emotional distress (Freud, 1917, 1923). This is visible in Sarita's fear of the dark, Jaya's blocked creativity, and Indu's divided selfhood. Brown and Bellugi (1964) are cited in the thesis discussion as part of the psychoanalytical dimension, while Freud remains the central theoretical reference for understanding how private suffering is connected with suppressed desire. In Deshpande's novels, psychological conflict is never isolated from social life; it is formed by the continuous pressure of duty, shame, gender hierarchy, and emotional denial.

Marxist and ideological readings of Deshpande become stronger when Althusser's concept of Ideological State Apparatuses is applied to the family, marriage, religion, education, and culture. Althusser (1971) argues that ideology shapes individuals by interpellating them into social roles, making them accept constructed identities as natural. Belsey (2013) also explains how ideology influences attitudes, behavior, and decisions through dominant social meanings. In Deshpande's selected novels, women are trained to become dutiful daughters, silent wives, sacrificing mothers, and bearers of family honor. Brannigan (2014) supports such a reading by linking literary texts with social structures and power relations. When this ideological frame is joined with Freud's psychoanalysis, repression appears not only as an inner mental process but also as the result of material social arrangements.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is framed through a psychoanalytic-Marxist approach, mainly drawing on Louis Althusser's theory of ideology and Sigmund Freud's theory of repression and neurosis. This framework is suitable for analyzing Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *That Long Silence*, and *Roots and Shadows* because these novels do not present women's suffering as only personal or emotional. Their pain is produced within a social order where family, marriage, tradition, morality, and gender roles work together to discipline women. The thesis also situates Deshpande's work at the meeting point of ideology and

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psychoanalysis, where patriarchal structures shape women's consciousness, desires, and self-perception, while the pressure of such shaping appears inwardly as repression, anxiety, silence, guilt, and identity conflict.

Althusser's theory of ideology provides the Marxist base of this study. According to Althusser (1971), ideology works through social institutions that produce subjects who accept dominant values as natural. His concept of Ideological State Apparatuses explains how institutions such as family, religion, education, culture, law, and marriage reproduce ruling ideas without always using direct force. In Deshpande's novels, patriarchy works in a similar manner. It does not always appear as open violence; it also appears as advice, custom, duty, shame, silence, respectability, and family honor. Belsey (2013) explains that dominant ideology influences attitudes, behavior, and decisions, and this idea helps in reading Deshpande's female characters as women whose identities are formed within a male-centered social structure.

Althusser's idea of interpellation is also central to this research. Interpellation means that individuals are "hailed" into social roles and begin to recognize themselves through those roles (Althusser, 1971). Sarita in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is interpellated as daughter, wife, mother, and professional woman, but these roles do not exist equally. Her identity as a successful doctor threatens her husband's masculine authority, while her earlier life as an unwanted daughter leaves deep emotional marks on her selfhood (Deshpande, 1980). Jaya in *That Long Silence* is interpellated as the dutiful wife who must protect the image of a stable home, even when this role demands the death of her independent voice (Deshpande, 1989). Indu in *Roots and Shadows* is shaped by family inheritance, social obedience, and ancestral authority, even when she tries to claim a modern and independent identity (Deshpande, 1983).

The psychoanalytic side of the framework comes from Freud's theory of repression and neurosis. Freud (1923) argues that when desires, fears, memories, or impulses are unacceptable to social and moral consciousness, they are pushed into the unconscious. However, repression does not end the conflict; it returns in indirect forms such as anxiety, guilt, fear, silence, emotional disturbance, and neurotic symptoms. This concept is useful for Deshpande's novels because her female characters do not simply suffer from outside oppression. They also internalize that oppression. Sarita's fear, Jaya's silence, and Indu's divided self are not only individual weaknesses; they are signs of psychic pressure created by gendered social expectations. The thesis also uses Freud's idea of neurosis to explain how sustained oppression produces psychological distress in Deshpande's characters.

Through Freud, repression can be understood as an inner wound, while through Althusser, repression can be understood as a social process. The strength of the present framework lies in bringing these two views together. Althusser explains how women are trained by social institutions to accept gender roles, and Freud explains how this training damages the inner life of the subject. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Sarita's marital trauma is connected with the ideological demand that a woman should not surpass her husband. In *That Long Silence*, Jaya's creative silence is connected with the ideology of the obedient wife. In *Roots and Shadows*, Indu's conflict is connected with the authority of family tradition and the burden of inherited values. In each case, psychological repression is linked with social control.

Resistance is also interpreted through this combined framework. In a purely social reading, resistance may appear as rebellion against patriarchy; in a psychoanalytic reading, it may appear as the return of the repressed. In Deshpande's selected novels, resistance is often quiet, hesitant, and inward before it becomes visible. Sarita returns to her father's house and confronts her fear; Jaya begins to examine the silence that has shaped her married life; Indu questions the authority of tradition and searches for a self beyond inherited roles. These acts are not dramatic revolutions, but they disturb the ideological order that has demanded obedience from them. Brannigan (2014) argues that literary texts can be read in relation to

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power and social structures, and this supports the reading of Deshpande's fiction as a space where private female suffering becomes a critique of patriarchal ideology.

The framework also explains the repercussions of resistance. Deshpande does not present resistance as easy freedom. When women resist, they face guilt, alienation, fear, social judgment, and emotional uncertainty. Freud's theory helps explain these repercussions as inner conflict produced by the clash between desire and internalized morality (Freud, 1923). Althusser's theory explains them as the social cost of refusing assigned roles within ideological structures (Althusser, 1971). Therefore, Sarita, Jaya, and Indu are not simply moving from oppression to liberation; they are negotiating a difficult space between submission and self-recognition. Their resistance exposes the power of patriarchy, but it also shows how deeply that power has entered their minds.

This study, therefore, applies psychoanalytic Marxism as an interpretive lens to examine how repression, resistance, and repercussion operate in Deshpande's selected novels. The Marxist dimension studies the role of family, marriage, culture, and social ideology in producing female subordination, while the psychoanalytic dimension studies the effects of this subordination on memory, desire, fear, silence, and identity. Leitch (2016) argues that literary theory allows deeper interpretation of texts by opening different layers of meaning, and this study uses that principle to read Deshpande's fiction as both social critique and psychological exploration. Through this framework, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *That Long Silence*, and *Roots and Shadows* are examined as narratives where women's inner lives cannot be separated from the ideological structures that shape them.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design and used textual analysis as its main method to examine repression, resistance, and psychological conflict in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *Roots and Shadows*, and *That Long Silence*. The primary data were taken from the selected novels, while secondary support was drawn from relevant critical and theoretical sources already included in the thesis reference list. Since the study was literary in nature, the analysis focused on characters, narrative situations, gendered silences, family structures, marital relations, and moments of self-questioning in the selected texts. The reading was guided by Silverman's (2015) view of qualitative inquiry as an interpretive method suited to meaning-making in social and textual contexts. The study further applied Althusser's (1971) concept of ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses to examine how family, marriage, culture, and social morality shaped female subjectivity, while Freud's psychoanalytic theory of repression and neurosis was used to interpret the inner conflicts, guilt, fear, silence, and fragmented identities of the female protagonists (Freud, 1923). Through this method, Sarita, Indu, and Jaya were analyzed as women whose private suffering was linked with patriarchal ideology and whose resistance emerged through self-reflection, emotional disturbance, and gradual awareness of their suppressed identities (Deshpande, 1980, 1983, 1989).

Findings and Discussion

The textual analysis of *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *That Long Silence*, and *Roots and Shadows* found that repression in Deshpande's selected novels was not presented as a single personal tragedy but as a social and psychological condition produced through patriarchy, family structures, marriage, class morality, and gendered expectations. In all three novels, the female protagonists were pushed into roles already prepared for them by society: Saru as daughter, wife, mother, and doctor; Jaya as wife, mother, and silent companion; and Indu as daughter, wife, and inheritor of family tradition. This finding directly aligned with Althusser's view that ideology works through institutions such as family, religion, education, and culture by shaping individuals into subjects who accept dominant roles as natural (Althusser, 1971). At the same time, the inner lives of these women showed that social control did not remain outside them. It entered their memory, speech, fear, desire, and self-image, which confirmed

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Freud's view that repressed conflicts return in the form of anxiety, guilt, silence, and psychic disturbance (Freud, 1923). The uploaded thesis also frames these novels through this same psychoanalytic-Marxist connection, especially through repression, resistance, and ideological conditioning.

In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, the analysis found that Saru's repression began in the family before it appeared in marriage. Her childhood was marked by emotional neglect, gender discrimination, and the preference given to the male child. The family, which should have been a place of emotional security, functioned as an ideological institution that trained her to experience herself as inferior. This finding fitted Althusser's concept of the family as an Ideological State Apparatus because Saru's mother and domestic environment transmitted gendered values without needing any formal law or direct political force (Althusser, 1971). Saru's later professional success as a doctor did not free her from this ideological control; rather, it intensified conflict in marriage because her success disturbed the masculine authority of her husband. In this sense, Saru's identity became divided between social achievement and domestic victimhood. Her statement, "I could do nothing. I can never do anything. I just endure" (Deshpande, 1980, p. 239), clearly showed the psychological result of this repression. She was not merely silent because she lacked words; she was silent because patriarchy had trained her to endure pain as a female duty. The thesis discussion also identifies Saru's marital suffering, silence, and helplessness as psychological repercussions of male ideology.

The findings further showed that Saru's resistance was delayed, indirect, and deeply psychological. She did not immediately confront the structures that oppressed her; instead, she first internalized them. Her silence became a protective wall, but this wall also imprisoned her. When she reflected that she had created a "wall of silence between us" (Deshpande, 1980, p. 114), the image suggested both defense and self-destruction. This supported Freud's idea that repression does not remove trauma but buries it in forms that later damage the subject from within (Freud, 1923). Saru's return to her parental home was therefore not only a physical movement; it was also a movement into buried memory. The finding here was that resistance in Deshpande's fiction did not always begin as open rebellion. It began when the woman recognized the source of her pain and started separating her own self from the roles imposed upon her. The thesis also reads Saru's silence and later self-recognition as part of the wider pattern of repression, resistance, and repercussion in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*.

In *That Long Silence*, the analysis found that Jaya's repression was centered on speech, writing, and marital identity. Unlike Saru, Jaya's suffering was not primarily presented through visible physical violence but through emotional erasure and long-term self-suppression. She had learned to maintain the image of a successful marriage by removing her anger, disagreement, and creative voice from public expression. Her marriage to Mohan was described through the image of "A pair of bullocks yoked together" (Deshpande, 1989, p. 7), which revealed a relationship based less on companionship and more on burden, discipline, and routine. Through Althusser's framework, this marital image showed how marriage operated as an ideological apparatus: it did not only join two people but also assigned the wife a submissive social position. Jaya's identity was formed through the demands of respectability, family stability, and male comfort. The thesis also notes that Jaya follows Mohan's decisions silently and recognizes how deeply she has been placed within the stereotype of the obedient wife.

Jaya's silence also revealed the psychological cost of ideological obedience. Her earlier self had desires, ambitions, and literary confidence, but married life turned her into a woman who measured herself through Mohan's expectations. This was where Freud's theory became especially relevant. Jaya's suppressed anger did not disappear; it became emptiness, fear, and identity crisis. The statement that she was "scared of breaking through" the image of a happy family (Deshpande, 1989, p. 191) showed how repression was maintained by fear of social

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collapse. However, the findings also revealed that writing became Jaya's main act of resistance. Saru moved toward self-recognition through painful remembering, while Jaya moved toward it through narration. Her decision that "the stillness between us will have to be broken" (Deshpande, 1989, p. 192) marked a shift from passive silence to conscious resistance. It did not mean complete liberation, but it showed that Jaya had begun to understand silence as an ideological trap rather than a natural female virtue. The thesis discussion also highlights Jaya's writing and self-analysis as the process through which she ended her prolonged silence.

In *Roots and Shadows*, the findings showed that Indu's repression was produced through tradition, family inheritance, bodily shame, and the moral policing of women. The family in this novel worked even more openly as an Ideological State Apparatus because it controlled women through custom, ritual, caste-conscious morality, and inherited obedience. Indu's memories of womanhood were marked by social taboos around the female body. The line "I was unclean" (Deshpande, 1983, p. 78) exposed how culture turned a natural bodily process into a source of shame. This finding was significant because it showed that repression was not only emotional or marital; it was also bodily. Female identity was disciplined from the beginning through ideas of purity, pollution, obedience, and silence. Althusser's theory helped explain this process because ideology worked by making such taboos appear natural, sacred, and unquestionable (Althusser, 1971). The thesis also discusses these menstrual taboos and social restrictions as examples of how women internalize shame within oppressive cultural settings.

Indu's resistance was also shaped by her awareness of gender inequality within family memory. Her reflection, "If I had been a son" (Deshpande, 1983, p. 163), captured the unequal value assigned to male and female children. This short statement carried the weight of a whole patriarchal economy in which sons represented continuity, authority, and honor, while daughters were treated as secondary or burdensome. From a psychoanalytic perspective, such recognition exposed Indu's wounded selfhood; from a Marxist-ideological perspective, it revealed the material and cultural structures that placed women below men inside the family. Indu's search for selfhood therefore became a struggle against inherited ideology. However, like Saru and Jaya, she did not become free in any simple or final way. Her resistance remained complex because she was emotionally connected to the same family structure that restricted her. The thesis also interprets Indu's journey as a movement from internalized social roles toward self-discovery and resistance against patriarchal expectations.

Across the three novels, the main finding was that repression and resistance were inseparable. Deshpande did not present resistance as sudden freedom from patriarchy; rather, she showed it as a slow, painful, and incomplete process of self-recognition. Saru's endurance, Jaya's silence, and Indu's shame all emerged from ideological systems that trained women to accept subordination. Yet these same conditions also produced cracks in obedience. Saru began to understand the violence behind marital normalcy, Jaya began to break silence through writing, and Indu began to question the authority of tradition. The findings therefore confirmed the usefulness of the psychoanalytic-Marxist framework: Althusser explained how social institutions produced female subjectivity, while Freud explained why such subjectivity became emotionally fractured. Deshpande's selected novels ultimately revealed that patriarchy worked most powerfully when it entered the female psyche, but resistance also began from that same troubled inner space.

Conclusion

The study found that Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *That Long Silence*, and *Roots and Shadows* present women's repression as a condition produced through both social ideology and inner psychological conflict. Saru, Jaya, and Indu are not shown as isolated sufferers; rather, their pain emerges from family structures, marriage, gendered morality, cultural taboos, and the repeated demand that women should remain silent, obedient,

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and self-sacrificing. Through Althusser's idea of ideology, the selected novels reveal how institutions such as family, marriage, and tradition shape women into accepted social roles, making oppression appear natural and respectable (Althusser, 1971). At the same time, Freud's theory of repression explains how these external pressures enter the psyche and return as guilt, fear, silence, anxiety, and divided identity (Freud, 1923). Deshpande's women resist, but their resistance is not presented as sudden freedom; it appears gradually through memory, writing, self-questioning, and painful recognition of the forces that have shaped them. Saru's confrontation with marital violence, Jaya's breaking of silence, and Indu's questioning of inherited authority show that resistance begins when women start naming the structures behind their suffering (Deshpande, 1980, 1983, 1989). Thus, the psychoanalytic-Marxist reading makes clear that Deshpande's fiction does not merely portray female victimhood; it exposes how patriarchy works through both society and the mind, while also showing the difficult but necessary movement toward self-awareness and agency.

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