

Teacher's Attitude is Student's Destiny

- G Manjulatha Devi

Abstract: Teacher- student relation is more than parent-child's. While children just come through the latter, they are made by the former. Children seem amenable to the suggestions of a teacher only when they are convinced that they are accepted by the teacher irrespective of their attitude or status. A loving society is established with the concern of the teacher to it and its individuals. Teacher's offhanded attitude is detrimental to the harmony of the world. It is necessary that an individual has to opt this profession out of his volition and carry through his job joyfully.

Keywords: vocation, remedy measures, conditioning principle, institutional ambiance, affability, learning result.

Every individual has a way to perform things in his own way which has no parallelism with others. His particular way of doing things reveals his behaviour. His personal life, social connections, economic status and family background impel him to form an attitude which, in turn, is presented through his behavior. As it involves genetic element, he inherits qualities from his parents who are the strong pillars of his character building. Learners who come to gather at a place to perform the activity of learning are identified different types as they are the products of different individuals produced in different environments. The teacher who takes over the project of teaching has to be aware of the family history of the learners and its ambiance to prepare himself with effective remedy measures to gentrify the character of learners. Dedication of the teacher to profession is indispensable to conduct this operation for healthy results. It is not just enough if the institutions contain efficient teachers, it is equally important that they should work with concern and attachment. The teacher should be a right substitute to a parent who can skillfully administer his family with his loving disposition and lead it towards noble destination with his wisdom and power of discrimination. It is necessary that teachers should accept teaching not as a profession but as a vocation. In the absence of love teaching looks like a mere mechanical activity where teachers and learners perform their activities as mere duties which would reflect no liveliness.

It is prerequisite in Teaching-Learning process that the teacher has to create a very pleasing impression of him among students. When the students develop positive attitude towards the teacher, accelerating the process of learning is, by all means, not an arduous task. Students should be convinced that the teacher is their benefactor and guide. This notion forms a strong base to the building of Teaching and Learning in which

the teacher and the ward feel secured from attitude problems and justify their roles by happily engrossing themselves in the activities uninterrupted by any psychological impediments. When attitude is individual's inherent quality, teacher is certainly not an exception from it. It is not as simple as it is imagined that a single person has to deal with so many heads that seem determined to evaporate his enthusiasm and it seems like a battle between one and many. If the teacher aims at victory in this battle, he should primarily reform himself to stand beyond human deficiencies and get full equipped to obviate any obstacle that would rattle the serenity of his purpose. Obviously his individuality suffers heavy damage because of the frequent attrition by the complicated tendencies of the wards and it is not uncanny if he loses his temper at times to alleviate the heaviness of his mind. His momentary emotion may permanently sap his motive as it creates adverse effect among learners and they mark boarders to bifurcate themselves from teacher. His solicitude and love for his profession supply him required energy to carry through this onerous task. He has to be very conscious of his behavior and keep ever smiling even in the most adverse situation also.

How the learners handle the process of learning depends on the kind of attitude they have cultivated towards learning and then practice it consistently to achieve their goals. The issue is overt that all students are not homogenous in their thinking abilities, reactions to same stimuli, and memory retrieving capacity. For example, when the teacher gives a sentence like ' **Darling not know.** ' Different students offer different explanations as under:

- Probably a little daughter is badgering her mother at midnight for an ice cream and mother says, 'Darling not now.'
- A lover is asking his beloved for a kiss in a crowd and his beloved denies saying, 'Darling not now.'
- A student tries to raise a doubt in the middle of the lecture and the teacher says, 'Darling not now.'

Whatever be the answer to a question it has its roots in their thinking which is formed because of their behavior that is likely established because of their family or environment or society. Environment can largely influence an individual's behavior. When the learner is provided sagacious environment he constructs a healthy attitude for the society of which he is a responsible member. For his all round develop the learner needs pleasant physical and healthy social environments. While spacious classrooms, seating arrangement, building model, greenery all around will make physical environment convenient to go ahead with the process of teaching and learning, the presence of loving individuals makes social environment conducive to learning. His physical comforts are the issues of great importance as they successfully interrupt his attention and upset his commitment to his goals and objectives. The teachers and the management should take every care to provide this basic facility to students in educational institutions. They should see that the learners feel relaxed at the sight of every object in the institution and feel comfortable to carry on with their project. Learners respond positively to

the environment in which they live and behave accordingly. Hence the teacher should create the environment that would fulfill the learners' demands and help them hone their skills in the field of their choice. So learning centers should focus on establishing needful environment where learners can grow towards success. Preparing the students for learning is the activity which the teacher should carefully perform. Any pressure on them would aggravate their antipathy to learning and this is more severe when they are impelled to learn something which they feel useless or irksome. At this juncture teacher's amicability and intelligence will serve the purpose. The teacher should elucidate the learners why they ought to concentrate on a particular learning item by submitting examples and references before them for their judgment. It is for this reason the teacher should go abreast with the latest and be quick in updating his knowledge.

Education institutions should opt right persons to assign this responsibility. The founders of learning centers should accept their share of responsibility in protecting the discipline of the society by producing noble individuals whose behavior is altered, principles are reconstituted, thoughts are elevated and civility is built by teachers. Any chaos in the world is due to narrow thinking of man who was once a member of some institution. The off-hand attitude of such place where he comes to to visualize his destiny will gradually develop cynicism in him and he will be a perfect villain by the time he leaves the institution. He has no importance for human values and therefore lives as a constant threat to the society. Curriculum is teacher's best aid to achieve his objectives. A successful teacher is he who knows how to make use of the curriculum to reach his goals in teaching. He has an objective to teach any lesson or poem or any language item. He comprehends what message the author or poet desires to communicate to the world through his writing and how its awareness or implementation would edify its mode of living to sustain its existence. He then proceeds to gather information or empirical evidences to support the writer's opinion to impart to students that would undeniably keep them motivated throughout his lecture. His diligence to collect the details, his elucidation of facts and truths and the validity of his demonstration supply sufficient source to learners where from they derive proper motivation that would make their way clear for further learning. The teacher who applies the conditioning principle will carry through the job of strengthening learning abilities among students. The teacher's appreciation or a word of praise or encouragement will be a good stimulus that would generate good response from students. After giving a comprehension test to students and analyzing their answers, if the teacher complements them saying, 'Good you have done well.' 'Really wonderful, well done.' 'I am happy with your performance if you work more seriously you will do it better.' 'Congratulations! go on, you have done fifty percent of job. Read it again and try to think it in a different way. So that you do it hundred percent.' Such complements imbue the minds of students with exultation and work with more commitment to show better performance.

Dismantling Patriarchal Metanarrative: Shashi Despande's *The Dark Holds No Terror*

- Nizara Hazarika

Abstract: The notion of *metanarrative*, as stated and criticized by Jean Francois Lyotard in his *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) is an abstract idea that provides an all encompassing, totalizing, comprehensive account of the various events, experiences, and socio-cultural phenomena based upon cohesive universal values. Patriarchy's hegemonic character reaffirms the false consciousness in women that they are subordinate to and unequal with men. The process of internalization and dissemination of this ideology is so powerful that women lack their normal capacity to question this false consciousness. Despande, in *The Dark Holds No Terror* exposes the politics through which patriarchy imposes its authority and legitimizes its central position and push women to the periphery. She opens up avenues for her characters to find the true human self in them. She digs at the motif of male ideology in suppressing women and oppressing them at their work.

Keywords: Patriarchal Ideology, Psychological Dilemma, Gendered Identity.

Metanarratives make absolute, universal and all-encompassing claims to knowledge. It is an ideological weapon to foster an overarching universal belief. It is based on foundational principles and is absolutist in its postulates. Thus, according to Lyotard, the postmodern condition is characterized by "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard, 1984: xxiv). He is also highly skeptical of the totalizing nature of metanarratives. The metanarratives often function as the grandnarratives that control the individuals, institutions, social practices and the society at large. As a philosophy it becomes an overarching principle and therefore violates the specificity of the individual. It homogenizes the human experiences and privileges the collective over the particular. Lyotard, therefore, seriously considers that metanarratives should give way to 'petite récits' or local or little narratives. He argues that there is a growing disillusionment with absolutist explanation of reality, like those offered by religion or political programmes like communism. Instead, in the postmodern era there is an emerging preference for little, single-issue engagements. Postmodernity, according to Lyotard, is characterized by no grand narrative which is totalizing and universal, but by little and multiple narratives which do not need any foundational principle or universal stabilization. Postmodernism tries to replace metanarratives by concentrating on specific local contexts. It values the great variety of human experiences and vouches for multiplicity of experience. It

underscores its disavowal of all-encompassing theories or master-narratives.

This very notion gave way to later debates on the various narrative systems by which human society organizes itself and gives meanings to its experiences. Metanarratives claim to provide complete explanations of systems and events from a transcendental position. Postmodern theory critiques such claims and questions the veracity of such foundational principles of metanarratives. Postmodern theory highlights the contradictions and instabilities that are inherent in any social practice or organization. Postmodernism thus deconstructs the notion of centre and questions the division between centre/margin. Postmodernism relativises such notions as truth, essence, knowledge, history, identity, self etc and postulates that they are the products and constructions of the patterns of narratives. It is in this context that the little, local narratives play a significant role. As an anti-foundational philosophy, Postmodernism opens up avenues for the individual to tell her/his narrative. This anti-foundationalism enables individuals to have an access to her/his own politics. In this connection, Tim Woods observes:

In other words, knowledge in the postmodern era can no longer be legitimated or sanctioned according to the great 'narratives' that have shaped western knowledge to date, like the notion of progress embedded in the Enlightenment, or the notion of social liberation through history embedded in Marxism, or the release from unconscious trauma harboured by Freudian theory. . . . Instead, all one can do is to utilize local narratives to explain things; hence, knowledge can only be partial, fragmented and incomplete. This is regarded as a radically new form of epistemological freedom, resisting the dominance of overarching patterns which appear to ignore the details (2007:20-21)

This resistance strategy of postmodernism is highly rewarding for the feminist theorists and practitioners. Postmodernism can be a philosophical strategy for feminism as it counters everything that is hegemonic and absolutist. As a dynamic intellectual discourse, Feminism in its critical and creative endeavours also attempts to disrupt and dismantle the patriarchal ideologies that suppress and repress women. Patriarchy as an overarching ideological discourse subjugates women and confines them to a secondary position. In its manifestation and institutionalization as a hierarchical system, it empowers men to control and manipulate women. It signifies male authority in suppressing women through social, political and economic processes. It arises out of the sexual division of labour that exists in the private domain of home and gets extended to the public domain of social and economic realms. Masculinity confers a privileged status of power and authority to men. The very ideology of patriarchy is transmitted and perpetuated through the traditional values and customs of the society.

Patriarchy's hegemonic character reaffirms the false consciousness in women that they are subordinate to and unequal with men. The process of internalization and dissemination of this ideology is so powerful that

women lack their normal capacity to question this false consciousness. So they are pushed to the secondary status in the society as the "Other." Being deprived of the right to subjectivity they are also often relegated to the status of objects. They are conditioned to accept their subordinate status and to look down upon their own sex as secondary and lacking in certain qualities. This image of women as submissive and powerless derives from the vantage point of andocentric thinking. Feminist discourse confronts these assumptions of society as political and exposes the patriarchal mechanism that perpetuates these sexist notions. Feminist theoretical discourse contests these assumptions as socially constructed and postulates strategies to reconstruct the social, cultural and economic values where women can have their own space. Both in its creative and theoretical domains, feminism attempts to question the complacent certainties of the patriarchal ideology.

However, women find that the denial of the semantic and the epistemological space to them as the most violent intervention in their existential condition. Production and dissemination of knowledge has always been the privilege and prerogative of men. The production of discourse is an important marker of one's identity and subjectivity. Discourse produces knowledge and power in the society. The production of discourse is central to the actualization of subjecthood. As Foucault would argue, power is always with someone who controls the discourse (Weeden, [1987], 1997:113). So the denial of the epistemological space makes women lose their role as agents of social change. They do not become the producers of meaning instead become its consumers. They have the option of either accepting or critiquing the male norms. But in both cases they need to depend upon the male discourse that produces those norms. Moreover, they lose the power to question them and are forced to accept the male norms in whatever form they are.

Metanarratives as the foundation of universalism sanctions ethical and political prescriptions for society. It roughly is accepted as the everyday notion of what principles a society is normally founded on. Patriarchal metanarrative validates the experiential reality of women as secondary to that of men as the truth. The patriarchal ideology naturalizes the subservient status of women as the norm. As a repressive strategy patriarchy exerts its control on the body and psyche of women. Feminism as a resistance discourse has its origin in male theories. This dependence on the male theory and language only reinforces their subservient status. In the male discourse women's experience is marginalized and male experience is valorized as the determining and authentic norm. Androcentrism, thus, becomes the governing principle of the society where men act as "subjects" and women as "Objects". As objects women are both governed and interpreted by the epistemological categories of the male discourse. Feminist theory questions the politics of this knowledge and power. The very notion of "woman" and the experiential realities she lives is foregrounded in such a questioning. Feminists argue for a shift from androcentricity to a non-dichotomous state of knowledge where women's thoughts and experiences are

recognized and validated. While recognizing the processes of biology, psychology and socialization, it demands an equal share in both the semantic and the epistemological space.

The power game of domination and subordination in the male-female relationship has its roots in the distinctiveness of the experiences and world-views of both sexes. The experiential realities of women often become the ground for their oppression. Bell Hooks in her influential book *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre* defines feminism as “the struggle to end sexist oppression” (2000:54). She opines that the experience of oppression permeates in the structures of society in terms of race, gender, class and culture hence women across the world should strive to end this oppression. The patriarchal power structure of societal organization throughout the world gives men the privileged status of domination. Women everywhere are always identified as physically weaker of the two sexes. They are regarded as irrational, passive, timid, conventional, volatile, unsystematic and emotional requiring the guidance of the active, dominating, creative, rational and powerful men. Women, through centuries of conditioning have become complicit with the patriarchal dominance and have become both victims and perpetrators of their own oppression. However, their cooperation with and submission to patriarchal dominance has been both conscious and unconscious. Even when they are conscious of their subjugated status and resist it, their resistance normally collapses as they lack a telos. Being part of the marginalized group of the society women's voices are always muted within the patriarchal power structure.

Thus patriarchal ideology has always put women in an inferior status and made them accept it as the absolute truth. But over the years women have realized the politics behind such a maneuver. Such absolutist propaganda has made women question their subservient status, resist it and rebel against it. Women have come to realize that self expression, individuality as well as independence are achievable. Women are aware of the multiple levels of oppression that they have to encounter in their day to day life. Patriarchy as a metanarrative has an overarching influence and has always subdued them. But with the passage of time women have started realizing their own essence, their own power to critique such andocentric views. They struggle for identity and agency and in an attempt to achieve this they negotiate and renegotiate their roles. Contemporary women's writing in India in a poignant way portrays this resistance, their search for a position in the society, and their conflicts.

Shashi Deshpande who has created a niche for herself in the contemporary Indian literary scenario reflects on women's search for selfhood and their resistance to patriarchal ideology. Deshpande exposes the politics through which patriarchy imposes its authority and legitimizes its central position and push women to the periphery. She opens up avenues for her characters to find the true human self in them. She digs at the motif of male ideology in suppressing women and oppressing them at their work. She portrays women's struggle to secure a position in the society and how women confronts with multiple levels of

oppression and suppression in their day to day life. Her works reflect her efforts to create a body of critical work that support and legitimize the claim to a discourse of women's writing that present women's vision of the world. Her writings reveal an intense preoccupation with women's experiential realities that voice women's concerns, feelings, emotions and, above all, women's identity in discourse. Her writings explore the conflict women undergo while fulfilling their traditional roles as daughters, wives and mothers. She began her writing career with short stories for magazines and later turned to writing novels. She mostly depicts the contemporary women on the threshold of transition who try to find and preserve their identity as wives, mothers and most of all as human beings. But Despande maintains that she does not intend to write only about women. She wants to write about human beings who happen to be women. Despande's works portray the experiential realities of the middle class Indian woman. Despande tries to subvert the patriarchal ideology through her narrative and characters. She focuses on the marginalization of women and resists generalizations. Through her narratives, she contends that the crux of all the existing evils against women is their subservient status which makes them accept everything in the form of silent servitude. Thus Despande maintains that one can bring about a change in one's condition through a process of self searching which can be attained by sheer will power, courage and resilience in the face of difficulties. Giving special emphasis on individual experiences, Despande presents the specificities of the individual experiences of women. The inner world of the protagonists is portrayed threadbare and the conflict between tradition and modernity the protagonists go through is explored in a detailed way. The women protagonists are portrayed to have caught in the complexities of a transitional society.

The Dark Holds No Terror is a narrative about Sarita who is caught in the vortex between tradition and patriarchal bindings on the one hand and a desire to attain individuality and independence on the other. The whole story revolves around Sarita's struggle to find a sense of self worth and identity. The narrative presents the multiple levels of oppression including sexual oppression that women experience in their lives. The novel depicts the psychological dilemma faced by the educated woman Sarita who is expected to accept the traditional patriarchal norms but which is resisted by her as it hampers in her attaining individuality and an identity of her own. The whole novel revolves around the character of Sarita who is a renowned doctor. The novel begins with the protagonist Sarita's coming home to stay with her widower father. She leaves behind her husband, children and everything that has given her recognition. But the fact remains that Sarita has left her home as a mode of escapism to get rid of the nightmarish brutality of her husband Manu. At her parental home Sarita is given the time and space to ponder and brood over the happenings. The narrative presents Sarita's life at present as well as in the past which takes a turn here and there, which breaks the linearity of the plot. The action does not follow in a pattern. Rather it moves in a to and

fro way. The plot's taking abrupt turn is a means of subverting the linearity, objectivity and focus on orderliness which are all male ideas.

The plot has been traditionally regarded as an intrinsic element of any narrative. Plot is the sense-making device for any narrative. Peter Brooks in his *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* talks extensively on the value of plot in any narrative. He offers a host of definitions for plot and suggests that plots ultimately lead to sense-making. Brooke opines that plot is intimately connected to desire which is always present as the starting point of any narrative. For him the desire for the ending is implicit in the beginning. By following the Lacanian model of desire, Brooks postulates that the desire is born from the split between need and demand. (1992:55) Feminist writers make use of plot as one possible means through which they can subvert the traditional narrative pattern by registering their difference. The plot which is supposed to rely on desire that gives the starting impulse for any narrative, is a difficult proposition for women writers as desire as an active principle is always male- originated in which women are only recipients. Thus plot in this sense cannot be a fruitful tool for women writers. Hence women writers make a strategy to resist the authoritative impulse of a traditional plot by deviating from it and experimenting with the movement of the narrative pattern. The plot has become fluid and there is a narrative arbitrariness in their writings. This is some kind of strategy used by women writers to critique patriarchal legitimacy and authority.

The Dark Holds No terrors portrays a narrative pattern that resists the traditional pattern of narrative. The novel opens with Sarita's coming to her parental home to meet her father. The novel portrays a vivid picture of Indian society, and the life of an Indian woman overcoming her past and the hurdles she faces due to family, career, and most importantly for being a female. The narrative does not move in a linear way, rather it moves in various directions, covering at once a number of temporal instances and spatial locations. The novel begins with Sarita's suffering mentally and physically due to her husband Manohar's brutal physical assault that keeps haunting her. Another incident that haunts her throughout her life is the accusation that her mother made that she was responsible for her brother Dhruv's death. Then it moves to Sarita's going home to meet her father. The action takes place at her ancestral place where she talks to her father about her mother's death and about her children. She meets Madhab who is studying in a college and is her father's companion. Then the first person narrator who happens to be the protagonist takes the plot to various directions as she goes back to her childhood days, college days, her defiance of her parents to marry Manohar, her medical career, her ascendancy in her career's ladder and finally her husband's strange behavior which finally made her leave her home to seek refuge at her father's place. This juggling of temporality, spatiality and narrativity lends a complex web to the plot. This is a highly subversive tool of a woman writer to critique the linear plot of the traditional patriarchal narratives. Despande uses it as a strategy to

dismantle the authoritative, logical sequencing of the traditional mode of narration. Another area where Despande tries to critique the traditional narrative is the representation of characters and their relation with each other as well as with the society. Despande tries to challenge the very normative processes which make men and women behave in a stereotypical manner. This is what Kalidas Misra talks of as “Her search for the location of a self outside the contested territories of conservative discourses slowly subverts the binaries and transcends to a dimension where the woman is matured and free to understand herself and her “shadows” (Nayak, 2005:73). Her portrayal of the female characters exhibit an ideological conflict. The dominant ideology focuses on the progressive voice of women, whereas the residual ideology focuses on the traditional women and their acquired cultural baggage. The emergent ideology, on the other hand, tries to unearth the unexplored areas, the upcoming ideas and the unopened avenues for women. It emerges in the novel when Sarita finally comes to terms with her life and walks back with her husband. Women writing in the contemporary period present such women characters who cross the threshold of traditional normativity in search of their selfhood. In the words of Sally Robinson in her work *Engendering the Subject: Gender and Self-representation in Contemporary Women's Fiction*, talks of women's self representation as:

a ... process by which subjects produce themselves as women within particular discursive contexts; it proceeds by a double movement: against normative constructions of woman and toward new forms of representation that disrupt these normative constructions. (1991:11)

The Dark Holds No Terrors amply illustrates such subjects. The protagonist Sarita presents herself as moving away from normative processes that construct the woman. She is brought up amidst patriarchal values that always privileged a boy child. Her mother overtly claims such ideology. She is always guilty for her brother Dhruv's death. Her mother always curses her: “Why didn't you die? Why are you alive, when he's dead?” (1990:191). She is always treated as an unwanted child by her mother. Her father is always silent in the tirade of her mother. Her mother truly carries the patriarchal values. Sarita remembers the discrimination which her mother had for their education and even for birthday celebrations. Sarita's recall of the past events presents Despande's awareness about the gender discrimination in the society. Sarita rebels against such gender discrimination. She says, “If you're a woman, I don't want to be one” (1990:62). Sarita's revolt presents modern women's rebellion against traditional patriarchal values. Sarita's pursuing her medical career against the wish of her mother, her leaving home to marry Manohar who belongs to a lower caste which makes her parents disown her, defying social convention by using Booze for a career advancement, her decision to leave her family and to go to her father's house and finally her decision to come back: all these again present her will to lead her life in her own terms. She says:

All right, so I'm alone. But so's everyone else. Human beings...

they're going to fail you. But because there's just us, because there's no one else, we have to go on trying. If we can't believe in ourselves, we're sunk. (1990:220)

Thus Saru gains her mental strength. She is no longer hesitant to face her life. She is confident about herself. She has gone beyond the traditional view of a woman as an obedient, demure and meek being. She is no longer doubtful about her potential as a human being.

Despande here creates a character who has the ability to critique the patriarchal value systems. She emerges as a new woman who has the potential to subvert such beliefs. She dismantles the representation of patriarchy as a grand ideology that sustains humanity, man-woman relationship and so on. Despande throws enough light on the relationship between man and woman. The relationship between Sarita's parents, between her and Manohar, between Smita and her husband are all presented within the parameters of patriarchy. Despande aptly presents how in such relationships the man is regarded as the superior being. Manohar's brutal sadism is also a result of the patriarchal belief that in a man-woman relation the man is always superior and the woman is inferior. His sadism starts the day when the reporter casually asks him: "How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but most of the bread as well?" (1990:200). This crushes all the male ego that Manohar had been keeping alive in spite of the fact that Saru was doing much better than him. His subconscious self could not accept it any longer. That night he assaults her physically when she was fast asleep. This process continued for some time. But the intriguing part is that he himself never remembers such acts. Patriarchy always privileges man over woman. Man should be the master in the household. Her father was the master. But when this status of man comes to be questioned, it results in such unconscious conduct as was done by Manohar. Sarita could understand this dilemma faced by Manohar and this is reflected in her speech that she delivered in the Women's Association that was formed by the students of her friend Nalu. She spoke:

Have you seen an old fashioned couple walking together? Have you noticed that the wife always walks a few steps behind her husband? That's important, very important, because it's symbolic of the truth. A wife must always be a few feet behind her husband. If he's an MA, you should be a BA. If he's 5'4" tall, you shouldn't be more than 5'3" tall. If he's earning five hundred five hundred rupees, you should never earn more than four hundred and ninety-nine rupees. That's the only rule to follow if you want a happy marriage. Don't ever try to reverse the doctor-nurse, executive-secretary, principal-teacher role. It can be traumatic, disastrous ... If the scales tilt in your favour, god help you, both of you. (1990:137)

Through this passage Despande presents a powerful critique of the patriarchal value system. The age long silence is broken when Sarita registers her mockery as well as disgust towards such values. Despande exposes all normative patterns that are intrinsic to a gender identity. These patterns are constructed by the male-centred discourses. She interrogates patriarchy's universal worldview through the character of

Vidya who accuses Shakespeare of presenting male world view and being anti-women in his plays:

But look at the way he made the women always subordinate to the men... But it's not just their roles. It's the way he made the woman's personality merge into the stronger colours of a man's personality. Look at Hamlet, Lear, Othello. And look at Ophelia, Cordelia, Desdemona. Poor, feeble shadows. And when you come to a conflict or a climax, the woman recedes into the background. Just look at the way he dispelled Lady Macbeth. And how splendidly she starts off, really! But so much of positiveness, so much of action is too much for the poor female and so she bows out. (1990:156)

Such passages are highly reflexive of Despande's critique of patriarchal worldview that always push off women to the periphery. Thus Despande presents the politics behind the identity construction and exposes all the normative patterns related to gendered identity. She tries to remap a new territory from the point of view of the marginalized and the oppressed. Her concerns are guided by her wish to map the complex subterranean region of woman's psyche, fraught with the pressure and dangers of a male dominated world, rather than mere love and marriage (Nayak, 2005:79). Silence can be a weapon to dismantle the patriarchal mode of writing. Male writing presents certain explicitness which denies silence or absence. Women's writing adopts the mode of silence to subvert the male, naked explicitness or male device of objectivity and completeness. Silence in its multiple modalities reflects women's oppression and suppression within the patriarchal power structures. Women's writing presents the creative dimension of silence and its potential as a site of resistance against patriarchal dominance. Dr. Jasbir Jain's words both understand and highlight this agenda of women's writing in India:

At another level women's writing is the literature of silence. Its meaning lies enclosed and camouflaged. It is also the literature of silence, for it seeks to express that which has been submerged and suppressed. Writing in itself, has always been an act of courage. And women have often resorted to different strategies to say what they wished to get across. (Jain, 1996: 8)

Women's writing valorizes the empowering power of silence. Patricia Lawrence's "Women's Silence as a Ritual of Truth: A Study of Literary Expressions in Austen, Bronte and Woolf" highlights the expressive and the resistant possibilities of women's silence. By exploring the works of feminist linguists, psychologists and poststructuralists like Foucault and Derrida, Lawrence traces

"what she sees as a female tradition of writing in which silences--- whether they take the form of observing, listening, thinking, meditating, dreaming, or deliberately refusing to respond to the speech of others--- become 'active presences'" (Hedges and Fishkin, 1994:9)

Sarita's silence throughout her life against her mother's tirade, curses, Manohar's physical assault and her broodings over the happenings in a covert way, presents her awareness as well as revolt against the happenings. She maintains a silence to cover up her pangs and sufferings. Her mother reacts to her deliberate refusal to respond to her mother's

vehement opposition to her pursuing medical profession. To her mother's taunting query if she wants to be a doctor, she does not reply: "I did not reply. I would not answer her. I stared at Baba instead, waiting for him to say something" (1990:141). Sarita remains quiet about Manohar's sexual assaults as well. Even though she understands Manohar's psychological problems, she maintains a silence. The narrative space is infused with a new psychic life, an eloquence of silence. Sarita negotiates the silence that represents first her alienation and then her freedom. She shifts from involuntary to voluntary silence, from repression to distancing when she finally leaves her husband and children and goes to her father's place. Here the silence is more eloquent than the loud speeches. Despande makes use of such silences to critique the hegemonic patriarchal narrative pattern. Such silences keep the avenues open for any action to take place. The novel ends in an open ended manner as Sarita goes back to her husband's home. But the reader is left with an uncertainty about what her future has in its store. This lack of completeness is a strategy used by Despande to subvert the completeness and neat closure that the traditional narrative mode presents.

Parody can be used as a dialogic mode to subvert the prior realities. Parody stresses on the dialogue between the past and the present by imposing a questioning of the past by opening a new text. With parody, the very notion of the original as something precious and rare is called into question. Parody is a powerful weapon for the feminists to interrogate and even transgress norms. Contemporary writers make use of parody as a strategy to launch their attack against institutions like patriarchy and restrictive norms. Despande's novels present a critique of patriarchy's central discourses. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Sarita is torn between two worlds—one formed by the values and norms imposed by the patriarchal structure, and the other, her indomitable will to realize her self-worth on the face of all those traumatic experiences. Her mother always tries to instill in her all the patriarchal values. Sarita's choice of medical profession and selection of Manohar as life-partner are means for Despande to subvert the centre (mother) marginal (Sarita) binary. Her mother always demolishes Sarita's self-will. The same is the case with Manohar. His sadism is a reaction to the subversion of the patriarchal norms which expects the man to be superior. When the opposite happens, he brutally attacks her. Sarita's leaving him and going to her father is also a strategy to find the authentic self in her. This jostling of Sarita from one inner space to another by defying one after the other portrays the fluidity of her existence. She finds a stark difference between her inner space and outer space and to resolve this she goes from one inner space to another. The values, and norms that she encounters are not conducive to her growth as an individual. She finally goes with Manohar by resolving that like others she too needs her own world, her own identity. Thus Despande's attacks are not exactly against men but against the patriarchal normative discourses and the discriminatory hierarchization of values and norms. Through her protagonist Sarita she

deconstructs the established norms and reconstructs a new position that gives Sarita a way to look forward to. Thus Despande in consonance with the postmodern concern of critiquing the metanarratives, deconstructs the metanarrative of patriarchy in the novel. It reveals the author's intense preoccupations with women's capacity to voice their concerns, feelings, psychological insights, emotions and to inscribe their identities into discourse. Though Despande avoids an aggressive challenge to patriarchy, her subtle maneuvering of the narrative subverts the chief agenda of patriarchy. Despande does not want to legitimize the rule of woman; rather she questions the normative practices of patriarchy that always marginalize women. Novels provide her with the semantic space to critique the patriarchal values and norms and *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is a novel which Despande uses successfully to subvert the patriarchal discourses. The narrative presents a reaction against the stereotypical representation of women and the author's ideological conflict with norms, values and hierarchies. The conflict gets resolved when Sarita emerges as an individual who is bold enough to face life by ignoring the patriarchal underpinnings.

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