

**Master of Arts**  
(M.A.)

**ENG-305**

**ENGLISH**



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<b>Subject: Literature and Gender (Part-I) ( Option-i)</b>	
<b>Course Code: 305 (i)</b>	<b>Author: Dr. Punam Miglani</b>
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<b>Jane Eyre : Charlotte Bronte</b>	

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Elderly servants

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## **1.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- To Classify the numerous depictions of romantic love and familial love offered in the novel, and elucidate how marriage is affected by social conventions
- To Describe the social and economic roles existing for women during the Victorian era



- To Discuss how children are perceived in Victorian society and how they are given treatment accordingly
- To Detect and discuss the novel's Gothic fundamentals and how they subsidize to character and plot progression
- To Clarify how Rochester represents the Byronic hero in Romantic literature
- To comprehend what features make Jane Eyre an iconic novel of the British Romantic period? Their social class, and detect the different means of education accessible to them
- To Compare and contrast Jane Eyre to other iconic female heroine from this literary era
- To Describe the central clash and recognize the prime themes and ideas

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION: JANE EYRE

One of the most widely read novels of all time; Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre is the story of a passionate and apparently difficult love set inside an enigmatic and hostile atmosphere of Victorian era. It is a melodramatic fiction, abounding with the enigmatic, suspense, and dreadfulness that outlines the genre, but it is also a novel that also caters to the social issues of the day. Through the chronicle, Brontë gives rise to questions about the restricted education provided in churches, schools, the anticipations and prospects for women, the cost of family networks, and the significance of romantic love when it fights with individual ideologies or the stern rules of Victorian society. Jane Eyre cultivates characters, who pursue their individualities by stimulating society's status quo.

Established in nineteenth-century England, the novel initiates with the account of a story depicting young Jane, an orphan who stays with an aunt who does not like her and does not demonstrate her any kind of compassion or fondness. When she comes to the age of ten, Jane is sent to a charity school called Loowood. In spite of the brutality of its headmaster, Jane grows corporal, intellectual, and emotive power. She then leaves Lowood School to turn out to be a governess for Adele, the ward of Edward Rochester of Thornfield Hall. Jane and Rochester both tumble in love in spite of their variation in their ages and social situations. Rochester is surrounded with enigma, on the other hand; bizarre sounds and incidents prosper in his mansion. Jane is bound to leave Rochester after the disclosure that



he is already married and has a wife, who is insane and as a result is being confined in the attic at Thornfield. Subsequently after so much of misery, Jane turns out to be the mistress of a village school. Later on she realizes that she has existing relations and she also inherits a fortune, which helps as well enables her to ultimately return to Rochester as an autonomous and independent woman. As the novel concludes, she states the reader purely and openly, “I married him,” and that she along with Rochester starts living together happily and “equally.”

The novel is like a coming-of-age narration that concentrates mainly on the experiences as well as sentiments that go along with Jane’s growth from a child to a grownup. There are as many as five distinctive phases in Jane’s progression where each of which is in one or other way linked to a specific place: her juvenile at Gateshead, her schooling at the Lowood School, her period as a governess at Thornfield Hall, her lifespan at Marsh End where she is a teacher in Morton, and her reunification with Rochester at Ferndean. Jane’s life reveals like a melodramatic venture surrounded within an atmosphere of psychological terror and relentless danger of devastation distinctive of Gothic novels.

Charlotte Brontë has made an effort to incorporate into the story numerous rudiments from her personal life. After Brontë’s mother is dead, an aunt helps in taking care of the Bronte sisters (Charlotte, Maria, Elizabeth, and Emily). The sisters were directed to Cowan Bridge, a school for children of clergymen. The harsh and deceitful vehemence of the headmaster in Jane Eyre is founded upon the fervent minister who was responsible to run Cowan Bridge. Jane’s personal loss of her precious friend at Lowood School due to tuberculosis reminisce the deaths of Brontë’s two sisters who also died of the same disease tuberculosis at Cowan Bridge. Just like Charlotte Brontë, Jane also turns into a governess, which was usually the only proficient profession for an educated woman at the time. The role as a governess offered her a decent vantage idea for Brontë to perceive and inscribe about the repressive social practices of nineteenth-century Victorian society. Depicting Brontë’s initial feminist standards, Jane is in a way rebellious at a time when women were anticipated to be submissive and docile. Through Jane Eyre, Brontë dares to challenge Victorian traditions by proposing that a woman’s virtues claim the similar admiration and respect as a man’s; furthermore, she makes an effort to challenge the conventions of Victorian literature by producing a well-developed and strong heroine with a rich inner life.



Even for example when Jane interrogates conventions of society, gender prospects, religious practices, and the significance of love, the novel fails to answer questions for the reader. Constant with the individual's expedition for an autonomous identity, which is a dominant precept of Romanticism, the reader is permitted to anticipate these subjects, still pertinent today.

### **A BRIEF ABOUT THE AUTHOR: BRONTE'S LIFE**

Charlotte Brontë was born on April 2, 1816 in Yorkshire, England. She was one of the six children of an underprivileged country clergyman; Charlotte underwent the suffering of the premature death of her mother, Maria Brontë, shortly after the family relocated to Haworth, England. Charlotte along with her sisters was sent to the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowen Bridge, the place which was bearing severe situations that added to the deaths of Maria and Elizabeth, her two elder sisters. Luckily, Charlotte and her younger sister, Emily both were lucky enough to come back home and could save themselves from the terrible living circumstances.

After coming back, Charlotte and her three living siblings (her brother, Branwell; her sister, Emily; and her youngest sister, Anne) formed their individual literary community in Reverend Brontë's parsonage. In 1831, Charlotte shifted to school at Roe Head, where she served as a teacher. Before finishing school in Brussels, she started serving in numerous governess positions. Later after recuperating from unappreciated love for a wedded professor, she came back to England and teamed up with her sisters in publication of *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell* (the pseudonyms of Charlotte, Emily, and Anne) in 1846. Only two copies of the book were sold but Charlotte got published the novel *Jane Eyre* in 1847. This became a prompt achievement for her as a great success and her pen name triggered a stir as to who may have transcribed the book. Unluckily, Charlotte was not able to relish the celebrity fame and attention which she has harvested from having inscribed a popular novel. All her siblings expired in rapid succession, leaving her as well as her father, the only survivors of the Brontë family. Charlotte afterwards wrote *Shirley* (1849), and *Villette* (1853). She later on became the spouse of her father's curate, Arthur Bell Nichols in 1853 but passed away a few months after the wedding.

### **THE LITERARY PERIOD**

Brontë happened to write all through the Victorian Age of British literature, which persisted from 1833-1901, christened in association with the supremacy of Queen Victoria. The social, political, and



historical impacts of the Victorian Age infused its literature. At the front position there was the ever-changing position and role of women. In 1840's, appeals started flowing for supporting women's suffrage. The Married Women's Property Act in 1882 protected women's privileges to preserve proprietorship after marriage. The Industrial Revolution unlocked doors for lesser class women to take employment in factories, maximum of which remunerated little wages and presented dreadful working conditions. The predicament of the educated but underprivileged woman makes Jane Eyre a mirror image of the times in which it was inscribed. The Victorian Age fetched an upsurge in literacy, and reading novels became a prevalent pastime. The characteristic Victorian novel was in a straight line connected to matters and apprehensions of contemporary society; authors endeavored to produce truthful visions of nineteenth century living. Stories were frequently published in successive form; readers eagerly waited for the monthly installments of solitary chapters. Besides Brontë, authors such as Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy also inscribed works that turn out to be quite popular.

## **1.2 MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT: JANE EYRE**

### **1.2.1 PLOT IN THE NOVEL**

Jane Eyre the main protagonist is a bereaved and orphan girl living with her aunt Mrs. Reed at Gateshead Hall. Mrs. Reed along with her children treats Jane brutally, and looks down on her as a destitute dependent. In order to punish her for a quarrel with her cousin which he actually didn't initiate, Mrs. Reed takes her in a red room and locks her there where Jane's uncle, Mr. Reed, had expired years ago. His ethereal occurrence frightens Jane. Shortly after, Mrs. Reed shifts Jane to the Lowood Institution, a charity school which was run by the duplicitous Mr. Brocklehurst. Lowood has a dreadful environment and a tough work ethos, though the considerate supervisor, Maria Temple, interferes occasionally to provide the girls a pause. At Lowood, Jane becomes a friend of another student, Helen Burns, who helps Jane to learn how to accept personal wrongs and inequality and have faith in a considerate God. Helen, nevertheless, falls ill with consumption and expires. When typhus widespread devastates the school's student inhabitants, new management comes forward to take over and further improve Lowood's surroundings. Jane starts flourishing under her freshly understanding and considerate teachers, and subsequently after six years, turns out to be a teacher herself.



Ms. Temple gets married and leaves Lowood, and the eighteen-year-old Jane publicizes her occupation as a private tutor. She is employed as the governess of the young Adèle Varens. Adèle is the child of Mr. Rochester; the elder, dark, and authoritative master of Thornfield Hall. Though in dwelling at Thornfield, Jane often overhears eccentric laughter, and one night saves Mr. Rochester from a fire in his bedroom. Similarly, on some another incident, Jane helps Mr. Rochester covertly bandage and sends away a man named Mr. Mason who was slashed on the third floor of the Mansion. Rochester puts blame on a peculiar servant, Grace Poole, but Jane is doubtful.

Mr. Rochester fetches a party of English nobles to Thornfield, comprising the gorgeous but scheming Blanche Ingram. She plans to get married to him, but Mr. Rochester somehow turns Blanche away, since he is gradually attracted to the simple, but ingenious and straight Jane. Mr. Rochester immediately requests Jane to get married to him. Jane, who has slowly started loving Rochester, agrees. Rochester quickly makes preparation for the wedding. But in the course of the small ritual, a London lawyer interferes and announces that Mr. Rochester is already having a wife; Bertha Mason who is from the West Indies. Her brother, Mr. Mason, also appears to confirm this. Mr. Rochester unwillingly agrees to it, and takes everybody to the third floor, where Bertha is exposed as a frenzied lunatic and was taken care of by Grace Poole. Rochester was deceived into the nuptial and he pleads to Jane to accompany him anyhow, but Jane refuses to be his mistress. Subsequently, a dream that notifies her to escape any kind of temptation, Jane sneaks away from Thornfield at dawn.

Destitute and penniless in an area of England, she is not aware of Jane undergoes three unpleasant days of begging, sleeping outdoors, and nearly at the verge of being starved. Ultimately she moves towards Moor House, the home of Mary, Diana, and St. John Rivers, who was a strict local clergyman. St. John offers Jane a position of teaching in a rural school. Jane soon realizes that an uncle of her whom she's never met has expired and left 20,000 pounds for her. That uncle happens to be allied to the Rivers siblings, so Jane unexpectedly has cousins. In her happiness at discovering a family, she splits her wealth equally amid them.

St. John plans to go to India as a missionary, and he puts forward a marriage proposal to Jane so that she also accompanies him and work for him. Jane senses family fondness for him but no love. She states that she would go as St. John's sister, but he was not ready to admit any state of affairs. St. John's dynamic disposition almost persuades Jane to sacrifice herself and wed him. But in her muddled



emotional condition, Jane goes through a kind of telepathic flash: she seems to overhear Rochester's voice calling to her. She instantly leaves to follow Rochester.

Jane discovers Thornfield Hall devastated due to a fire that Bertha had put in Jane's old bedroom. In the course of the fire, Bertha happened to jump from the roof and perished. Rochester protected his servants, but underwent wounds that left him blind and lost a hand. Jane meets the crestfallen Rochester at Ferndean, his woodland retreat, and assures always to take care of him. They get married, bring back Adèle from boarding school, and have a son. Rochester ultimately recuperates sight in one eye.

### 1.2.2 SETTING OF THE NOVEL

The novel *Jane Eyre* takes place in five settings: Gateshead Hall, Lowood School, Thornfield Hall, Moor House, and Ferndean. Every setting involves a diverse phase in Jane's life. Gateshead, a place where the Reeds happen to live and Jane passes her young childhood days, comprises the frightening red-room, the dwelling in which she undertakes her first actually horrifying experience: a hypothetical meeting with her Uncle Reed's ghost. Jane's noticeable modification from this chance meeting stimulates Mrs. Reed to send her to Lowood School, a place occupied with likewise domineering situations. Brontë demonstrated the severe circumstances of Lowood School after an English school which she joined with her sisters. As in the novel, students also experienced typhus and consumption. Scholars observe that Mr. Brocklehurst's doctrine of deprivation counterpart Evangelical doctrines prevalent in Victorian England, and a lot of readers read this segment as a criticism of those divisions of Protestantism. Subsequently from Lowood, Jane further moves on to Rochester's Thornfield Hall, which bears a terrifying, threatening occurrence at night, and Brontë makes use of moderately a few additional Gothic rudiments, such as explanations of the paranormal, to outline the setting. Moor House and Ferndean both bear less established physical importance, but significant names. The word "moor" implies a mooring, a dwelling where something is curtailed. Moor House is the place where Jane obtains her legacy, yielding her steadiness for once in her life. The "fern" in Ferndean signifies the new growth that Jane and Rochester will be going to experience there, and Jane accepts that she has spent the preceding ten wonderful years there with Rochester as his wife as well as his equivalent.

### 1.2.3 CHARACTERS



## JANE EYRE

She is an orphan in the story and happens to be the protagonist in the novel. When the novel opens, she is depicted as a lonely and feeble ten-year-old girl residing with her aunt and her children who do not like her but as the novel moves further; she nurtures courage and gains strength. Her hard work, efforts and robust mental capabilities helps her in distinguishing herself at Lowood School. While working as at the position of governess at Thornfield, she experiences the pleasures as well as pains as a consequence of love due to her association with Edward Rochester. Subsequently as a result of being betrayed by him, she drives to Marsh End and here she tries to recover her spiritual concentration and in the meantime she also realizes her personal courage as soon as she rubbishes marriage proposals offered by St. John River. Towards the end of the novel, she turns out to be a strong, liberated and independent lady who is happily wedded to the man with whom she is in love.

The progress of Jane Eyre's is the dominant focus of the novel. Since the very opening of the narration, Jane retains her perception of her pride as well as self-esteem, a pledge towards justice and judgment, a faith in God, along with fervent temperament. Her uprightness is repeatedly verified during the progression of the novel, and Jane is bound to learn to stabilize the recurrently incompatible facets of her so as to discover a sort of gratification and satisfaction.

Being an orphan from the time when she was a child, Jane feels herself to be expatriated and detested in the very opening of the novel, and the unkind conduct she gets from her Aunt Reed as well as her cousins only aggravates her emotion of estrangement and alienation. As she was scared that she will never be able to find a real realization of family or of a community, Jane is forced to feel the necessity and urge to belong to some place to find out "kin," or at the most "kindred spirits." These longing furies her equally strong urge for independence and liberation.

In her hunt for independence, Jane at the same time scuffles with this question of which kind of liberation and independence she desires. Though Rochester in the beginning proposes Jane with a chance to unshackle her desires and passions, Jane also happens to comprehend that such type of independence could too mean a kind of enslavement which means by existing as Rochester's concubine, she would be in a way surrendering her pride and honesty for the sake of her own emotions and feelings. St. John Rivers suggests Jane a different type of sovereignty: the autonomy to act completely



on her ethics and principles. He unlocks to Jane the likelihood of implementing her aptitudes and talents entirely by living as well as working with him in India. Jane ultimately recognizes, nevertheless, that this autonomy would likewise establish a sort of imprisonment, since she would be enforced to retain her real state of mind, feelings and her exact desires constantly in check.

Charlotte Brontë might have made an effort to create the character of Jane Eyre as a source of presenting rudiments of her personal life. There are so many indications that advocates that Brontë, also, wriggled to catch stability amid love and liberty besides to discover others who bear feelings and urge to understand her. At various points in the book, Jane seems to express the author's fundamental sentiments and opinions on gender, religion and social class.

### **EDWARD FAIRFAX ROCHESTER**

Edward Fairfax Rochester is lover of Jane who appears to be a dusky, fervent and gloomy man. He has been presented as an old-fashioned idealistic hero married to disturbed and a crazy Creole woman, Bertha Mason. For so many years Rochester pursued consolation for several in the company of mistresses. Eventually, he strives to cleanse his life and desires, the simple and innocent Jane Eyre whom he has appointed as a governess to teach his foster daughter, Adèle Varens, to be his companion for life time. The marriage fails to take place when she comes to know about the presence of his wife. It seems as if as repentance for his wrongdoings, he is penalized with the forfeiture of an eye and a hand when Bertha puts fire at Thornfield. He ultimately achieves bliss towards the end of the novel when he gets married to Jane.

In spite of his harsh style and manner and for not being having predominantly attractive appearance, Edward Rochester succeeds in winning Jane's heart, since she senses that they both are alike spirits, and as he seems to be the first individual in the novel who proposes Jane long-lasting love and an actual family and home. No doubt, Rochester is superior to Jane economically and socially, and moreover men were generally considered to be obviously higher to women during Victorian period. To some extend, Jane seems to be equal to Rochester's intellect. Furthermore, when their marriage is interjected with the revelation that Rochester is previously wedded to Bertha Mason, Jane is confirmed to be morally superior to Rochester.



Rochester feels remorse for his previous liberties and lust; however, in various ways he has verified himself to be feebler than Jane. Jane understands that existing with Rochester as his paramour would mean the forfeiture of her self-respect and dignity and eventually, as a result, she would become dishonoured and reliant upon Rochester for affection and love, however isolated and unprotected by any kind of real wedding pledge. Jane decided that she will only get into marriage with Rochester when she has achieved a fortune and a clan, and also when she is almost on the edge of deserting passion completely. She delays till she is not excessively overtaken by her personal paucity, solitude, emotional weakness, or passion. Moreover, since Rochester has become blind as a result of fire and also towards the end of the novel has lost his mansion house, so in a way he has grown weaker whereas Jane has developed strength. She asserts that they are alike, but actually the marriage has in fact leaned in her favor.

### **SARAH REED**

Sarah Reed is the hostile aunt of Jane who takes care of her till she comes to the age of ten. In spite of Jane's efforts to make a compromise with her aunt before her death, her aunt declines to yield. She meets her death detested by her own children and unashamed of her own maltreatment towards Jane. She has been presented as a figure of prejudice, injustice and duplicity in the novel. Her distrust and jealousy towards her husband because of his care for bereaved Jane proves an awful absence of love as well as charity for others. She calls Jane wicked, however she deceives John Eyre by telling lies merely to rob her of her legacy. Her readiness to behave wickedly against a kid resulting out of jealousy embodies her character as a spiritual charlatan. She also endorses tyrannical Victorian patriarchal ethics. She pays much attention to her son, John as compared to her daughters, pampering him all the time in spite of his ferocious and extravagant manners. Her carelessness towards his mistakes denotes the undeserved favoring of men above women. Mrs. Reed has been depicted as a stationary character, established by her incapability to develop outside her bitterness towards Jane. Because of this resentment, Mrs. Reed converts into a gauge for how far Jane has developed and transformed. At the time of Mrs. Reed's confession on her deathbed, Jane honestly excuses her and desires her peacetime; however, Mrs. Reed still dislikes her. This variation lightens how Jane has ripened beyond the furies of her childhood. In this light, Mrs. Reed's demise offers a conclusion on Jane's resentment and annoyance, as they no longer grasp control over her life.



## **JOHN REED**

He is the offensive and ruined cousin of Jane who is accountable for Jane's expulsion to the red-room. He is habituated to consumption of alcohol and gambling. John allegedly commits suicide at the age of twenty-three, when his mother is not ready or capable to pay his arrears and debts. He is actually spoiled child of Mrs. Reed. John frequently puts Jane into suffering with his mom when Jane sojourns with them; but, later on in his life as a grownup, John rubbishes his life as an intoxicated and also a gambler and consequently becomes miserable and depressed to the extent that he slaughters himself.

## **ELIZA REED**

Eliza Reed is one of the ruined cousins of Jane. She is excessively envious of the attractiveness and beauty of her sister, Georgiana. She maliciously disrupts Georgiana's escape with Lord Edwin Vere, and then converts into a fervent Christian. However, her kind of Christianity is without any kind of empathy or mortality; she displays no compassion for her fading mother and pledges to put an end to all communication with Georgiana after the demise of their mother. She moves in a convent in Lisle, France and ultimately turns out to be the Mother Superior and eventually leaves all her money to the church.

## **GEORGIANA REED**

Georgiana Reed is the sister of John and Eliza. Georgiana is one of the most beautiful members of the family but she is very superficial and egocentric kind of personality, who is more interested mainly in her own individual pleasure. She blames her sister, Eliza or disrupting her plans to get married to Lord Edwin Vere. Like Eliza, she displays hardly any feelings or emotions following the death of their mother. Ultimately, Georgiana gets married to an affluent, but worn-out man of the society.

## **BESSIE LEE**

She is a maid at Gateshead, who from time to time comforts Jane by narrating her pleasurable tales and humming her songs. Bessie happens to visit Jane at Lowood, where she feels very much overwhelmed by Jane's scholarly accomplishments and ladylike conduct. Bessie ties the knot with the coachman, Robert Leaven, and bears three children.

**Mr. LLOYD**

Mr. Lloyd is a kind hearted apothecary who advises to send Jane to school after she has gone through the shocking experience in the red-room. He is kind and genuine enough to write a letter to Miss Temple to free Jane of the allegations which Mrs. Reed has leveled against her.

**Mr. BROCKLEHURST**

Mr. Brocklehurst is a miserly, callous hearted manager of Lowood. He fraudulently feeds less food to the girls in the school and makes them starve, whereas his wife as well as his daughters lives lavishly. Being the minister of Brocklebridge Church, he embodies an adverse kind of Christianity, one that is devoid of any kind of empathy or benevolence.

**HELEN BURNS**

She is kind of divine and scholarly friend of Jane while she is at Lowood. Though she is unethically penalized by Miss Scatcherd at Lowood, Helen is able to preserve her composure, partly through her adoring relationship with Miss Temple. It is from Helen that Jane acquires the traits of forbearance and harmony and peace, but Jane is not able to agree to Helen's denial of the substantial world. Helen's inspiring scholarly accomplishments stimulate Jane to work tough and hard at school. While taking her last breath in Jane's arms, Helen visions to find concord and peace in heaven and then subsequent reunification with Jane.

**MARIA TEMPLE**

Maria Temple is a wholehearted and warm superintendent at Lowood who kindly provides the girls with cheese and bread when they are not able to get edible breakfast. Besides, she is remarkable scholar, a typical epitome of lady like conduct. She is also very sympathetic and compassionate being. Miss Temple proves to be an optimistic and positive character for Jane. She is concerned about Jane and Helen, and takes care of them. Sometimes she offers them seed cakes in her own room and provides Helen with a cozy and warm, personal bed when she is fading.

**MISS MILLER**



Miss Miller is one of the teachers for the youngest students at Lowood who greet Jane on her very first night in the school.

### **MISS SCATCHERD**

Miss Scatcherd is the history and grammar instructor at Lowood who frequently embarrasses and reprimands Helen Burns.

### **MISS SMITH**

Miss Smith is a red-cheeked tutor at Lowood whose duty is to be in charge of sewing training.

### **MADAME PIERROT**

Madame Pierrot is a pleasant and likable French teacher at Lowood who hails from Lisle, France.

### **MISS GRyce**

Miss Gryce has been presented as a roommate as well as fellow teacher at Lowood.

### **MRS. ALICE FAIRFAX**

Mrs. Alice Fairfax performs the duties of a housekeeper at Thornfield; at first Jane thinks her to be owner of Thornfield. She lovingly and warmly greets Jane to Thornfield, which is typical in contrast to icy cold conduct and treatment received by Jane at Gateshead, the Reed's house. Mrs. Fairfax is not at all in favour of marriage between Jane and Rochester's because of the variation and difference in their ages and societal classes. When she plans to leave Thornfield after the mysterious vanishing of Jane, Rochester provides her a substantial pension.

### **BLANCHE INGRAM**

Blanche Ingram has been presented as a gorgeous and conceited society woman, with Rochester acting to be in love. The remarks made by her about the dullness of governesses display the disrespect that maximum governesses confronted in the well-off Victorian families where they are employed as governess. Depicted as a pursuer of wealth and fortune, she is more concerned about Rochester's money as compared to his personality. Blanche has been presented as an unattractive, avaricious ideal of feminine.



## **ADELE VARENS**

Adele Varens is a student of Jane at Thornfield, whose foreign background, similar to her mother, exposes many of Jane's Anglo eccentric biases. Adele primarily in the opinion, demonstrates disagreeably French features of inclination towards sensual, materialistic pleasures along with being egocentric but a stable British schooling removes all of these undesirable and negative features and consequently by the end of the narration Adele turns out to be submissive, amusing friend of Jane.

## **CELINE VARENS**

Celine Varens used to be mistress of Rochester. She is also a Parisian opera singer who used Rochester to extort money, though in reality she loathed him. Rochester comes to know about the reality of her real feelings when he happens to listen to a chat between her and one of her lovers. He instantly discontinues his association with her. She finally escapes to Italy along with a musician, leaving behind her daughter, Adele, whom she claims to be the child of Rochester. Her duplicity and sensuality depict her as another adverse and negative approach of womanliness.

## **BERTHA ANTOINETTA**

Bertha Antoinetta Mason Rochester is wedded wife of Rochester. She is a crazy woman who has been kept in the attic. A Creole woman who hails from Spanish Town, Jamaica, Bertha was wedded to Rochester with the agreement of their fathers, who intended to amalgamate their fortune. This attractive and magnificent woman crumbles into wickedness, crudeness, and ultimately insanity soon after their marriage. Mother of Bertha also happened to be insane and the novel proposes that problems of Bertha are actually inherited from her mother. Subsequently after the demise of his brother as well as father, Rochester comes back to England with Bertha and locks her up in the third story of Thornfield, by appointing Grace Poole as her caretaker. She seldom runs from her captivity, executing a kind of violence every time she becomes free. Finally, she sets Thornfield on fire. Bertha has also been displayed as another instance of unpleasant strangeness in the narration

## **RICHARD (DICK) MASON**

Richard (Dick) Mason is the brother of Bertha. He is a man of weak will. In the course of his visit to Thornfield, he is nibbled and pierced by Bertha when he climbs up to her chamber alone. As soon as he



comes to know about Jane's forthcoming marriage to Rochester, he reaches there to impede Rochester's deceiving objectives.

### **GRACE POOLE**

Grace Poole has been kept as a keeper of Bertha at Thornfield and she has a fondness for gin. It is because of her liquor consuming bouts that provoked lapses resulting in allowing Bertha to run away from the third floor of the mansion and also provoking her to commit numerous wrongdoings in the house, consisting of the ultimate fire that extinguishes Thornfield and harms Rochester. Grace is primarily blamed for all the wrongdoings committed by Bertha in the household.

### **MOTHER BUNCHES ROCHESTER**

Mother Bunches Rochester acquired this name when he is masked as a gypsy astrologer in the course of a house get-together at Thornfield.

### **HANNAH**

Hannah is an aged housekeeper of River's who primarily contradicts Jane's entry to Moor House. Jane reprimands Hannah for her class partiality, but later on she becomes a friend of Jane.

### **ST. JOHN**

St. John (pronounced sin'jin) Rivers is cousin of Jane. St. John has been depicted as a very icy, tyrannical, and extremely enthusiastic character. Being not happy with his modest station as the minister at Morton, St. John desires to turn out to be a missionary so as to fulfill his desires for supremacy and magnificence. St. John attempts to put pressure on Jane to wed him and travel to India but Jane repels him, and he devotes the rest of his life, promoting British colonization by imposing Christian morals and values on the natives.

### **DIANA AND MARY RIVERS**

Diana and Mary Rivers are sisters of John and cousins of Jane. Diana and Mary are paradigms of proficient, compassionate, and knowledgeable women. While working as governesses, they are capable to display the conducts through which intelligent, well-mannered women are dishonored because of



their positions in well-to-do families. St. John's matrimonial proposal aids Jane in maintaining her freedom and independence as soon as she is confronted with his autocracy.

### **ROSAMOND OLIVER**

She has been embodied as a gorgeous and coquettish daughter of a prosperous man in Morton; Rosamond sponsors the girls' school in Morton. Though she appears to be in love with St. John but actually she got engaged to the affluent man, Mr. Granby before St. John travels to India. Though St. John is substantially fascinated by her physical beauty, he comprehends that Rosamond would fail to be a decent wife for him owing to her light-hearted and nearly superficial disposition.

### **MR. OLIVER**

Mr. Oliver is the father of Rosamond. He is the only affluent man in Morton. Although the Rivers are a primitive and honoured family, the Olivers have acquired "new money." He admires St. John's abilities and considers him an appropriate partner for his daughter but at the same time he considers missionary work as sheer waste of St. John's intelligence.

### **MR. BRIGGS**

Mr. Briggs is attorney of John Eyre. Briggs stops Jane's adulterous nuptials to Rochester and makes an effort to hunt for her succeeding her uncle's demise so that she is able to assert her legacy.

### **JOHN EYRE**

John Eyre is an uncle of Jane and the Rivers. John Eyre makes riches from wine trading in Madeira. Though he is making plans to adopt Jane but he expires before they happen to ever meet, he leaves all of his fortune of 20,000 pounds to her. He fought with Mr. Rivers, and consequently didn't dispense his wealth to the Rivers offspring.

### **ALICE WOOD**

Alice Wood is appointed by Rosamond Oliver; she is a bereaved who aids as Jane's subordinate at Morton.

### **ELDERLY SERVANTS**



There are elderly servants also who take care of Rochester at Ferndean when Thornfield is devastated in the fire.

### **1.3 FURTHER MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT: JANE EYRE**

#### **READING THE NOVEL, CHAPTER WISE**

##### **CHAPTERS I-XV**

The story of Jane Eyre initiates on an icy November day at Gateshead with dingy wind and piercing rain. Jane is hardly ten years old and she is reading Bewick's History of British Birds in the same room where her cousins John, Eliza, and Georgiana are also accompanying her. An orphan, Jane is repeatedly reminded that she is not from a similar position in life as her cousins, with whom she now lives. "You are a dependent...you have no money," again and again. she is voiced by her bullying cousin John, who hurts her in the presence of his sisters, but Jane's aunt makes her responsible for the happening and as a punishment locked her in the "red-room," the place where her uncle took his last breath. However, while in the red-room, she recollects her uncle, who fetched her to his home at Gateshead after the death of her parents and is also reminded that he made his wife promise to take care of Jane as "one of her own children"

At the same time, she envisions that her Uncle Reed's ghost has moved into the room since his wife did not retain the promise, and as a result, she starts shouting. The servants named Bessie and Abbot, both come to save her, but Mrs. Reed commands Jane to go back into the room where she becomes unconscious.

After some time, Jane wakes up with the feeling that she has seen a nightmare. Mr. Lloyd, the family doctor, is present there. He moves out of the room and Jane hears Bessie and Sarah chatting about her illness. Jane announces that the occurrence gave her nerves a shock and that she senses the "reverberation to this day". After the conversation with Jane about her life at Gateshead, Mr. Lloyd advises Mrs. Reed to send Jane away to school.

Through the discussion of Abbot and Bessie, Jane comes to know that before her birth, her mother wedded a poor clergyman and was cut off by her father. Her mother and father both died within a month of each other due to typhoid fever. November, December, and half of January pass away as usual



although Jane still anticipates to be sent away to school. In the meantime, she keeps on tolerating harsh treatment given by her aunt.

Mr. Brocklehurst, the director of the Lowood School, reaches there and talks to Jane about religion. Mrs. Reed informs him that she wishes Jane to be brought up with modesty and stability. She further adds that Jane has an inclination to be a liar. When Brocklehurst moves away, Jane opposes her aunt for the hardships she has undergone and by doing so she senses as if she has enjoyed a sense of vengeance. After four days, Jane starts her fifty-mile voyage to Lowood School, and on a gloomy and rainy day, she reaches her new home. On the very next day she happens to meet her classmates and teachers. Jane quickly apprehends that the living situations will be severe at Lowood, as the girls are overworked due to bad working conditions and also given inadequate meals. Mr. Brocklehurst reaches at the school and notifies the teachers and students that Jane is a falsifier. Appreciatively, she is later justified. Though Brocklehurst orates modesty and paucity to the girls, he embezzles the school's cash to support a superior life style for his family. Jane suffers for numerous months at Lowood, and as spring reaches along with an outburst of typhoid fever, Helen passes away, and when a doctor comes over there he discovers that Jane is sleeping close to her.

This exposed his cruelty and as result Mr. Brocklehurst is discontinued from his duties. Jane spends six other years at Lowood, and then she stays over there for two more years and starts working as a teacher. Eventually she takes a decision to find a position as a governess and applies for the same position at Thornfield. Subsequently she agrees and accepts the position and comes to know that she has to take care of a young French girl named Adele who is the child of Mr. Rochester. Rochester reveals to Jane that Adele is the offspring of a girlfriend for whom he once felt great passion; but unfortunately the woman ran off after leaving her child. Though she observes little of Rochester and defines him as "changeful and abrupt," Jane comprehends that she is plunging in love with him. One evening, Jane gets out of bed after she hears a demonic laugh and realizes that Rochester's room is on fire. He states that it most probably has been initiated by his drunken domestic Grace Poole.

## **CHAPTERS XVI-XXX**

Jane is astonished to find that the fire causes no response or any kind of reaction; Rochester's servants consider that he went to sleep with a candle by his bed, and Grace Poole displays no marks of guiltiness



or regret. Rochester moves away from Thornfield for a few weeks, and when he comes back he fetches along with him a cluster of prosperous guests. Amid the party is a lady named Blanche Ingram, to whom Jane trusts that Rochester will propose his hand in matrimony. Jane is lovesick and sorrowful that “he made me love him without even looking at me”. The visitors stay at Thornfield for some days. In the meantime, a man called Mr. Mason comes, stating that he is an old acquaintance. A gypsy also lands and initiates telling licks. Blanche’s temperament evidently modifies after passing time with “Sybil,” the gypsy. When it is turn to have her luck read, she is told that Blanche’s temper altered after the gypsy told her that Rochester’s domain may not be as magnificent as she had expected. Finally, Rochester discloses that he had concealed himself as the gypsy.

News reaches that Jane’s cousin John has died, and as a consequence her aunt, Mrs. Reed, has suffered a stroke and is wishing that she come back to Gateshead. After her arrival, she anticipates reuniting with Mrs. Reed. In order to pass her time, she outlines portraits of her cousins, Eliza and Georgiana, and they are overwhelmed by her ability and talent. All through the visit, Jane discovers the origin of her aunt’s hostility toward her; Mrs. Reed assumed that her husband had more fondness for Jane as compared to his own children. Before her demise she hands over Jane a letter that had reached three years before, from Jane’s Uncle John Eyre revealing that her uncle anticipated to adopt her and give her all his fortune. After her return to Thornfield after the death of her aunt, Jane antedates an engagement between Rochester and Blanche but much to her astonishment, he puts forward his proposal to her.

Jane and Rochester make preparations to interchange vows, but suddenly they are interjected as a man yells that Rochester is previously married. The man presents himself as Mr. Mason and announces that he is the brother of Rochester’s wife Bertha Mason. Rochester proclaims that Bertha has gone insane, and when the marriage party proceeds to Thornfield, they observe Bertha acting madly. It is exposed that Bertha was after the fire that happened earlier and that Rochester retains Bertha concealed upstairs under the care of Grace Poole. Jane then realizes that Mr. Mason was directed to Thornfield with the news that the uncle who had intended to adopt her is now on his deathbed. Rochester proposes that he and Jane should secretly sneak away and live a life together, but Jane comprehends that she would not be pleased as his concubine. She arrives at the conclusion to leave Thornfield. Jane wanders without any direction, and a coachman ultimately transports her to Whitcross. Now without any money she is forced to beg. She is nurtured by the offerings of a farmer who offers her a piece of bread. After



spending a night in the forests, Jane trails a road that hints to the house of three siblings; Mary, Diana, and St. John Rivers and primarily presents herself as Jane “Elliot.” St. John informs Jane that he will make efforts to get her a job.

## CHAPTERS XXX-XXXVIII

A month passes away and Jane passes time recuperating with Mary and Diana as they get ready to go back to their places as governesses. St. John sees Jane in a modest position as a teacher of deprived girls at the Morton School. St. John conveys to his sisters that their uncle has expired and that he has left his wealth to another relation. Jane initiates her teaching position at Morton, and she firstly senses disinterestedness in her working situations. St. John visits Jane, and they are interjected by the visit of Rosamond Oliver, whom Jane defines as an “earthly angel.” She recognizes that St. John is in love with Rosamond. After realizing Jane’s actual name, St. John discloses to her that her uncle has expired and he has left for her a legacy of twenty thousand pounds. She also comes to know that St. John’s complete name is in fact St. John Eyre Rivers, and that they are in fact cousins. Nevertheless, she has turned out to be an heiress, Jane actually feels elated by the fact that now she has new relations ruminating on this true “wealth to the heart,” and makes a decision to divide her legacy with St. John, Mary, and Diana. St. John makes the decision to convert into a missionary in India, and considerably much to Jane’s astonishment, he suggests her to accompany him as his wife. Jane constantly discards St. John, and he responds indifferently towards her. Eventually, Jane resolves that she needs to go back to Thornfield, and when she reaches over there she notices “a silence of death” over there.

She comes to know that Bertha Mason charred the house to the ground. In his effort to protect Bertha, who jumped to her death, and his servants, Rochester somehow lost his vision and one of his hands. Jane drives to Rochester’s present home, Ferndean, where he exists with two servants named John and Mary. Rochester makes a proposal to Jane, and she gives her consent. Time passed away; Jane and Rochester have been thankfully happily married for ten years. Rochester has recuperated sight in one of his eyes, and he was capable of seeing the birth of their son. Jane concludes the novel by informing her readers that Cousins Mary and Diana both got married, but St. John still exists as a single and assists as a missionary in India.

### 1.3.1 NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE



The narrative of this novel attempts to concentrate completely on Jane, s actions only which appear in the book as they seem to influence her progress into a liberated, ethical and persistent kind of woman with strong mind and as readers we are merely attracted towards experiences of other characters as in a way. Jane is able to learn from them. Each and every character as well as instance consequently has a kind of some impact on the development of her character and personality and this in a way helps in bringing out the theme of the novel thriving and alive, each and every detail is needed to be counted. A fresh and new progress in the character of Jane never let us feels surprised. Every phase, every component of character expansion has been provided with a comprehensive foundation previously in the novel.

The novel has been reflected as a fictitious autobiography thus it comprises a first-person narrative. Therefore; we are bound to perceive proceedings and characters from the point of view of the narrator, resulting in providing the story with a great amount of genuineness. Besides, it also develops a very close union amid the narrator and the reader and thereby helps in drawing the readers into a more rapid immersion with the story. These requisitions to the reader every time arise at intensity or deed, for instance when Rochester requests Jane to excuse him after their first nuptial day.

As far as the structure of the novel is concerned it is divided coarsely into five parts. This happens to take place in five diverse settings: Gateshead, Lowood, Thornfield, Moor House and Ferndean Manor. Every time Jane travels from one setting to a new setting, the description is disrupted to establish the scene and anxiety as this location will construct a new phase in Jane's life. It seems as if we were shifting from one action to another as in a five-act drama, equivalence that the narrator practices herself in Volume I, Chapter 11. There are likewise two scenes where Jane journeys back to a former location from Thornfield to Gateshead, to visit her aunt, and from Moor House to Thornfield, while she hunts for Rochester.

Every location seems to have been controlled by a diverse tone. At Gateshead, for example, the manner appears to be fervent, gullible and desolate. This replicates the point that the description is concentrated on a kid at this point and displays us the further unreasonable rudiments in Jane's character. The tendency at Lowood is emotionless, tough and reserved and reveals the restrictions forced on young womenfolk by religious thought and social perseverance. Further at Thornfield the background is private and figurative, for example the house itself is recognized with Rochester, and the description



swings between the stride and the reserved. We sense Jane's pulse hastening as she initiates to get in love with her master; on the other hand, we are likewise also made familiar with a sense of the manner in which she is wavering between craving and self-discipline. Next at Moor House, the tone once again turns out to be further stuffy and repressive as Jane slides back into a further conservative fashion of acting, and starts feeling the restrictions and slaying burden of St John's impulse to martyrdom. Nevertheless, once we lastly arrive at Ferndean we transfer eventually from dread and probability to enchantment. The novel hence fluctuates between the unreasonable – Gateshead and Thornfield – and the balanced – Lowood and Moor House – replicating the separations inside Jane herself, till resolution is attained at Ferndean.

### **1.3.2 THEMES IN JANE EYRE**

#### **LOVE VERSUS AUTONOMY**

Jane Eyre is very much the narrative focused on quest to be adored. Jane quests for a sense of being appreciated and also for belonging. Therefore, Jane utters to Helen Burns: “to gain some real affection from you, or Miss Temple, or any other whom I truly love, I would willingly submit to have the bone of my arm broken, or to let a bull toss me, or to stand behind a kicking horse, and let it dash its hoof at my chest” (Chapter 8). However, during the sequence of the book, Jane needs to absorb how to upsurge love without surrendering and wounding herself in the procedure. Her anxiety of dropping her autonomy inspires her to refuse the marriage proposal of Rochester. Jane trusts that “marrying” Rochester while he is still officially married to Bertha would mean offering herself as a concubine and surrendering her own honesty for the sake of emotive satisfaction. Her life at Moor House examines her in a contradictory way. Here, she relishes financial freedom and engrosses in valuable and beneficial work, educating the deprived; however, she is devoid of emotional nourishment. Though St. John offers a wedding, proposing to her a company erected around a common resolution, Jane sees that their nuptials would stay loveless.

However, the proceedings of Jane's halt at Moor House are essential assessments of Jane's autonomy. Merely after demonstrating her self-reliance to herself can she wed Rochester and not be unequally reliant on him as her “master.” The marriage can be one between equals. As Jane says: “I am my



husband's life as fully as he is mine. . . . To be together is for us to be at once as free as in solitude, as gay as in company. . . . We are precisely suited in character—perfect concord is the result” (Chapter 38).

## RELIGION

During the course of the novel, Jane scuffles to discover the exact equilibrium between ethical obligation and earthly inclination, between responsibility to her soul and responsiveness to her body. She comes across three chief religious figures: Mr. Brocklehurst, Helen Burns, and St. John Rivers. Everyone embodies a model of religion that Jane eventually discards as she constructs her individual notions about trust and opinion, and their concrete consequences.

Mr. Brocklehurst assumes the oratory of Evangelicalism when he asserts to be eliminating his students of arrogance, but his technique of exposing them to numerous deprivations and embarrassments; he behaves in a non Christian manner when he commands to cut the wavy hair of one of Jane's classmates so as to lie straight. Of course, it is difficult to follow prohibitions of Brocklehurst's and his duplicitous sustenance of his personal lavishly rich family at the cost of the Lowood students displays Brontë's caution of the Evangelical movement. Helen Burns's timid and long-suffering manner of Christianity, on the other hand, is too submissive for Jane to assume as her own, though she adores and loves Helen for it.

Several chapters later, St. John Rivers offers one more ideal of Christian conduct. His is a Christianity of desire, magnificence, and exciting arrogance. St. John wishes Jane to martyr her emotive conducts for the gratification of her ethical duty, proposing her a mode of life that would entail her to be unfaithful to her personal self.

Even though Jane concludes by declining all three replicas of religion, she does not give up ethics, spiritualism, or a faith in a Christian God. When her marriage is disturbed, she pleads to God for consolation (Chapter 26). As she strolls the moorland, deprived and famished, she places her existence in the hands of God (Chapter 28). She sturdily objects to Rochester's immoral dissolution, and she declines to think through existing with him while church and state still believe him wedded to another female. Even though Jane can hardly realize herself to sabbatical the single love she has ever recognized. She praises God for aiding her to escape what she discerns would have been a dissipated life (Chapter 27).



Jane finally discovers a relaxed central ground. Her divine understanding is not detestable and domineering like Brocklehurst's, nor does it involve departure from the daily world as Helen's and St. John's religions do. According to Jane, religion aids to control excessive desires, and it spurs one on to mature determinations and accomplishments. These accomplishments comprise of complete self-knowledge and ample trust in God.

## **SOCIAL CLASS**

Jane Eyre seems to be very much critical of Victorian England's stern social hierarchy. The most noteworthy handling of this theme is possibly seen in Brontë's survey of the intricate social position of the governesses. Like Heath cliff in *Wuthering Heights*, Jane is a person of enigmatic class status and, as a result, an origin of utmost stress for the characters around her. Jane's attitude, refinement, and education are reflective of a noblewoman, because as per norms it was expected of Victorian governesses, who educated children in manners as well as academics, were anticipated to hold the "culture" of the nobility. But for being paid workers, they were usually entertained as servants; thus, Jane was left impoverished and helpless while at Thornfield. Jane's comprehension of the dual standard becomes clearer when she is enlightened about her feelings for Rochester; she is in a way his conceptual but not his communal equal. Even before the calamity encircling Bertha Mason, Jane is uncertain to marry Rochester as she perceives that she would feel obliged to him for "condescending" to marry her. Jane's anguish, which emerges most strongly in Chapter 17, appears to be Brontë's evaluation of Victorian class attitudes.

## **GENDER RELATIONS**

Jane fights repeatedly to attain equality and to conquer repression. Along with class hierarchy, she must grapple against patriarchal sovereignty against those who trust women to be subservient to men and attempt to manage them as such. Three main male characters intimidate her craving for equality and integrity: Mr. Brocklehurst, Edward Rochester, and St. John Rivers. All of these three are actually misogynistic at some level in each attempt to retain Jane in a compliant position, where she is not able to convey her personal notions and emotions. In her search of autonomy and self-knowledge, Jane must flee Brocklehurst. She does not accept St. John, and come to Rochester only after making it clear that they may marry as peers. This endmost condition is fulfilled once Jane manifests herself fit to function,



along the time she passes at Moor House, in the company of community and in a family. She will not rely merely on Rochester for love and affection and she can be economically independent. Moreover, Rochester gets blind at the conclusion of the novel and thus in a way dependent on Jane to be his “prop and guide.” In Chapter 12, Jane pronounces what was in her time a radically feminist philosophy:

## **HOME AND BELONGING**

During the course of the novel, Jane articulates her notion of home as a site where she both belongs and can be serviceable also. When the Reeds’ apothecary, Mr. Lloyd inquires if Jane is content to live at Gateshead, Jane highlights that it is not her house since she has no right to be there. In the first chapter, Jane explains herself as “a discord” at Gateshead as her disposition doesn’t match that of the Reeds, and “useless” as according to her as she doesn’t fit in with the family, which prevents her from contributing to the happiness of the house. Moreover, Jane’s sense of isolation is aggravated because no one is fond of Jane at Gateshead, and she also has no one to love in return. At Lowood, Jane tries to get work elsewhere after Miss Temple’s withdrawal largely because she trusts it was Miss Temple that made Lowood home like. In the absence of the person she loves most, Jane’s functionality is no longer sufficient to make Lowood as home. Later, at Thornfield, Jane shares such a great emotional relationship with Rochester that she proclaims him to be her “only home,” but she goes away from Rochester because staying with him would subscribe to his sin and injures his soul. After learning about Bertha Mason, she perceives morally useless person around him. By the end of the novel, when Jane comes back to Rochester, she can at last be beneficial to him, in part because he now must rely on Jane for his eyesight. Jane’s wish to belong is associated with her desire to be valuable to another person, and these inclinations steer her decisions throughout the whole novel.

## **ANXIETY AND UNCERTAINTY**

Brontë presents terrifying Gothic imagery to culminate anxiety and unpredictability encompassing Jane’s place in the world, particularly by explaining the supernatural. The reader’s first experience with the Gothic and paranormal is the frightening red-room. Uncle Reed may not precisely visit the room, but his association with the room haunts Jane as a remembrance of the incomplete pledge that she would have a home at Gateshead and the truth that Uncle Reed cannot certify that she will be loved. Later on, the tempest that divides the chestnut tree where Rochester and Jane kiss generates an ominous



ambience as if nature itself opposes their wedding. This phenomenon assists to alert Jane that regardless of appearances, her contentment with Rochester is not actually safe. Additionally, many intellectuals have recognized Bertha as a Gothic duplex of Jane, or a corporal manifestation of the vicious passions and annoyance that Jane held in her youthful years. This relationship between Bertha and Jane highlights apprehensions around Jane becoming Rochester's life partner. Even without having any knowledge of Bertha, Jane broods that Rochester will be weary of her, and their marriage would overturn the firm Victorian social class system by possessing a governess to marry her master. In this manner Bertha's over hanging existence displays Jane's fright about their imminent marriage and the obscurity of Jane's social position.

## 1.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Throw light on the red-room?
2. How does change take place at Lowood?
3. How Adele is connected to Mr. Rochester?
4. What are the reasons which force Jane to leave Thornfield Hall?
5. Elucidate Why Jane drops the proposal of marriage to St. John River?
6. What according to you is the central conflict of Jane Eyre as depicted by Charlotte Brontë?
7. Describe the use of some literary techniques in Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte with examples.
8. Elucidate how Jane Eyre has been depicted as a strong female character during the course of the whole novel?
9. Do you think that Jane's marriage with Rochester is a happy ending in Jane Eyre or not and also explain why?
10. Prove that Jane Eyre is both a realist and Gothic novel?
11. Compare and contrast the characters of Mr. Rochester and St. John from Jane Eyre.

## 1.5 SUMMARY

Jane Eyre, a beautiful novel written by Charlotte Bronte was first printed in 1847 as Jane Eyre: An Autobiography, and Currer Bell (Bronte's pseudonym) was registered as the editor. The book was extensively appraised as a classic which granted new genuineness and truthfulness to the Victorian



novel with its pragmatic portrait of the internal existence of a woman, marking her scuffle with her natural yearnings and social environment.

When the novel commences, the main protagonist is a 10-year-old orphan girl. She happens to live with the family of her uncle; her mother as well as father had expired because of typhus. Except the governess, the family excludes Jane. Later on she is sent to a grim and remote Lowood Institution which was a charity school and where all the students were maltreated. “Lowood,” as the name indicates, is actually one of the “low” points in the young life of Jane. In spite of such adversity, she is able to collect sturdiness and confidence.

After some years as a student and then as a teacher at Lowood, Jane becomes courageous as well as brave enough to leave. She is able to get an employment as a governess at Thornfield Hall, where she happens to encounter her refined employer Edward Rochester who was a very rich and impulsive person. At Thornfield Jane takes care of young Adele who was the offspring of a French dancer who used to be mistress of Rochester and develops friendship with benevolent housekeeper Mrs. Alice Fairfax. Jane gets in love with Rochester; anyhow, he is anticipated to get married to the haughty and socially eminent Blanche Ingram. Rochester ultimately responds to Jane’s emotions and offers to get married. But on the day of their wedding, Jane finds out that Rochester will not be able to officially marry her, since he already possesses a wife, Bertha Mason, who has become insane and is kept away in lock and key on the third floor due to her aggressive conduct and behavior; her existence now describes the odd noises which Jane used to hear in the mansion. Accepting that he was trapped into that marriage, Rochester perceives it justified in following his association with Jane. He begs her to accompany him in France, where they will be able to live as husband and wife in spite of the legal forbidding, but Jane rejects it on principle and runs away from Thornfield.

Later on Jane is met by some people who take care of her and whom she afterwards finds them to be her cousins. St. John, an ethical clergyman, is one of them. He offers her a position and shortly offers a marriage proposal and that she accompanies him to India as a missionary. Jane primarily accepts to leave with him, but not as his life partner. However, St. John persuades her to review his recommendation, and a flickering Jane eventually pleads to Heaven to indicate to her what to do. Immediately, she listens to a mesmeric yell from Rochester. Jane comes back to Thornfield to discover that the estate was burnt, put on fire by Rochester’s spouse, who afterwards jumped to her death.



Rochester, in his effort to rescue her, had lost his vision and blinded. After being reunited both Jane and Rochester get married. Rochester after some time gets back some of his vision, and later on the couple had a son.

## 1.6 KEY WORDS

- **Abhor**-to regard with extreme dislike
- **Acumen**-keenness of perception or discrimination, especially in practical matters
- **Affability**- being pleasant and at ease in talking to others
- **Ameliorated**- to make better or more tolerable
- **Anathema**- something or someone that one vehemently dislikes
- **Antipathy**-settled aversion or dislike
- **Artifice**- clever or artful skill; also: false or insincere behavior
- **Ascetic**- strict self-denial as a measure of personal and especially spiritual discipline
- **Assuage**- to lessen the intensity of (something that pains or distresses)
- **Audacious**- contemptuous of law, religion, or decorum
- **Augment**-to make greater, more numerous, larger, or more intense
- **Automaton**- an individual who acts in a mechanical fashion
- **Avaricious**- greedy; excessively acquisitive in seeking to hoard riches
- **Aversion**- a feeling of repugnance toward something with a desire to avoid it
- **Benefactress**- a woman who confers a benefit; especially: one that makes a gift
- **Bilious**- of or indicative of a peevish, ill-natured disposition
- **Cadence**-a rhythmic sequence or flow of sounds in language
- **Capricious**- governed by impulsive and seemingly unmotivated notion or action
- **Cessation**- to delay, be idle
- **Coadjutor**- one who works together with another
- **Confabulation**- informal talk or discussion
- **Conjecture**- to arrive at or deduce by conjecture: guess
- **Consecration**- to make or declare sacred



- **Consternation**- amazement or dismay that hinders or throws into confusion
- **Diffidence**- state of being hesitant in acting or speaking through
- **Docile**- easily taught, led or managed
- **Ebullition**- a sudden violent outburst or display
- **Effaced**- eliminated or made indistinct by or as if by wearing away a surface
- **Effluvia**-an invisible emanation; especially: an offensive exhalation or smell
- **Elysium**- the abode of the blessed after death in classical mythology
- **Emaciated**- abnormally thin or weak; especially because of illness or a lack of food
- **Eradicated**- done away with as completely as if by pulling up by the roots
- **Eschew**- to avoid habitually; especially on moral or practical grounds
- **Ewer**- a vase-shaped pitcher or jug
- **Expostulate**- to reason earnestly for purposes of dissuasion or remonstrance
- **Fastidious**- very attentive to matters of cleanliness or detail
- **Gregarious**- fond of company, sociable
- **Harangue**- a ranting speech or writing
- **Ignominy**- deep personal humiliation and disgrace
- **Impediment**- something that impedes; especially an organic obstruction to speech
- **Impetus**- a driving force: impulse
- **Impetuous**- marked by impulsive vehemence or passion
- **Impudence**- a state of being marked by contemptuous boldness or disregard of others
- **Inanition**- the exhausted condition that results from lack of food and water
- **Industrious**- constantly, regularly, or habitually active or occupied
- **Injudicious**- not judicious: indiscreet, unwise
- **Insuperable**- incapable of being surmounted, passed over, or solved
- **Interloper**- one that intrudes in a place or sphere of activity
- **Lamentable**- that is to be regretted
- **Lugubrious**- exaggeratedly or affectedly mournful
- **Meretricious**- tawdrily and falsely attractive



- **Morass**- marsh, swamp; figurative, a complicated or confused situation
- **Noxious**- physically harmful or destructive to living beings
- **Odious**- arousing or deserving hatred or repugnance
- **Opprobrium**- something that brings disgrace
- **Ostensible**- intended for display: open to view
- **Pallid**- deficient in color
- **Parley**- to speak with another
- **Penurious**- marked or suffering from a cramping and oppressive lack of resources
- **Perfidious**- the quality or state of being faithless or disloyal
- **Physiognomy**- facial features held to show qualities of character by their configuration
- **Preternatural**- exceeding what is natural or regular
- **Precocious**- exhibiting mature qualities at an unusually early age
- **Presentiments**- intuitive feelings about the future
- **Propensity**- an often intense natural inclination or preference
- **Propitious**- favorably disposed
- **Pungent**- a sharp, stinging, or biting quality especially of odors
- **Quiescent**- marked by inactivity or repose: tranquilly at rest
- **Ravenous**- very eager or greedy for food, satisfaction, or gratification
- **Refectory**- a dining hall
- **Remonstrance**- an earnest presentation of reasons for opposition or grievance
- **Remuneration**- something that pays an equivalent to for a service, loss, or expense
- **Reviled**- subjected to verbal abuse
- **Sagacity**- being keen in sense perception
- **Salubrious**-favorable to or promoting health or well-being
- **Sanguine**- having temperament marked by sturdiness, high color, and cheerfulness
- **Scourge**- a cause of wide or great affliction
- **Solace**-alleviation of grief or anxiety
- **Soporific**- causing or tending to cause sleep



- **Stile**- a step or set of steps for passing over a fence or wall
- **Supercilious**- coolly and patronizingly haughty
- **Superfluity**- excess, oversupply
- **Talisman**- an object held to act as a charm to avert evil and bring good fortune
- **Throng**- a multitude of assembled persons
- **Torpid**- sluggish in functioning or act
- **Traverse**- to go or travel across or over
- **Trifle**- something of little value, substance, or importance
- **Truculent**- feeling or displaying ferocity
- **Tumult**- disorderly agitation or milling about of a crowd, usually with confusion of voices
- **Usurious**- practicing usury: the lending of money at exorbitant interest rates
- **Veneration**- respect or awe inspired by the dignity, wisdom, or talent of a person
- **Vicinage**- a neighboring or surrounding district

## 1.7 SELF ASSESSMENT TEST

1. Evaluate the details provided by Brontë about the weather in the introductory chapter of the novel. How is it able to establish the temper of the story as it opens up?
2. Why does it appear to be ironic that Jane has been depicted as the guilt-ridden party in the incident with John Reed? With whom has John been compared by Jane? What is she trying to suggest by this evaluation?
3. Elucidate why the first person point of view has been effective in the novel.
4. Compare and contrast the religious approaches of both Helen Burns and those of Mr. Brocklehurst.
5. Explain the views with which Jane wants her readers to empathize.
6. Jane remarks: “It is in vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquility: they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it” Explain this in context with politics, role of women, and contemporary society.



7. What kind of treatment does Rochester give to Jane in the course of their preliminary encounter and what light does it throw on how their bond will progress in future?
8. Why does the events in Rochester's life have appeared as deplorable to Victorian readers?
9. Throw some light on the gypsy who appears in the narrative and also explain the significance of her conversation with Blanche and what has been revealed through it?
10. What message and symbolism does Bertha Mason, frequently labelled as the "madwoman in the attic" convey?
11. What do you think why Jane's verdict to leave Thornfield should be considered as the most significant decision which she takes in the novel?
12. Explain how does St. John talk about Jane's appearance and also throw light on why did Brontë repeat this account of Jane's physical appearance?
13. What is the effect of stay of Jane at Marsh End and the Moor on her mind?
14. Explain the course of bond and friendship that Jane grows with Diana and Mary.
15. St. John mentions Jane as "unfeminine." Explain on the basis of which he makes this statement and how reasonable is this comment made by him on Jane?
16. It has been observed by some critics that the conclusion of the novel seems to depict that a woman in Victorian times could only discover real contentment through marriage. Do you agree or not? How has this outlook progressed over the time?
17. Do you think that usage of weather aids to create mood in the narration? Do you consider weather as a part of a Gothic element or not?
18. Describe the different locations: namely Gateshead, Lowood, Thornfield, Moor House, and Ferndean Manor also their impact on Jane's progress and expansion as a character.
19. Throughout the book, Jane is defined as "plain" or unattractive. In spite of this, Erica Jong refers to her as "the first modern heroine in fiction." Elucidate the valiant abilities possessed by Jane that seem to matter more than appearance. How could Jane's life aid as an example for womanly readers in today's world?



20. Mention at least three themes that have been established in *Jane Eyre* and also elucidate how they have been established.

## 1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. It is an abandoned compartment in Gateshead Hall where Mr. Reed, Jane's uncle happened to die nine years ago preceding the beginning of the novel. The red-room bears a forbidding, terrifying atmosphere that petrifies Jane when Mrs. Reed puts her under lock in the room as a punishment. In accumulation to its association with death and brash red scheme, the room is icy and seems to be emotionless and hushed there by intensifying terror of Jane. Her fear reaches a climax when she visualizes the ghost of Uncle Reed in the room, and she dreads that the ghost has come into existence to take vengeance on Mrs. Reed for her pitiable conduct towards Jane.
2. After the deaths of a number of students due to a massive typhus outbreak, followers of the public claim for an inquiry into the reasons which were responsible for rapid spread of the infection. This investigation leads to expose the school's appalling situations into light. Well-off supporters discover a new cluster of supervisors to substitute Mr. Brocklehurst in order to run the school. Mr. Brocklehurst remains treasurer of the school but, he no longer holds the control of Lowood, and the school changes into a civilized organization.
3. Adele is child of Mr. Rochester and the offspring of Celine Varens who was Rochester's paramour during the course of his time when he was in France, but eventually Rochester breaks up after learning that Celine was double-dealing with another man. Celine confirms that Adele is his own daughter, but actually the fact of his fatherhood remains vague. Rochester never trusts that Adele is his daughter and Jane also stresses that there is no resemblance between Adele bears and Rochester. However, Rochester decides to take accountability and responsibility of the girl irrespective of her paternity.



4. Jane is forced to leave Thornfield Hall so that she can evade the inducement of becoming Rochester's paramour. Throughout her dialogue with Rochester after their terminated marriage, Jane scuffles with the point that despite so much of happenings, her love for Rochester still exists. When she tries to evade Rochester's kiss, she clearly confesses that it is so since he possesses a wife, Bertha Mason, and Jane somehow feels remorseful for falling in love with a married man. After the discussion, Jane has a visualization of her mother boosting her to abscond enticement, so she trails her ethical integrity and sneaks out.
5. Jane does not approve the offer of St. John to go to India as his life partner since she is not at all interested to marry him. Though she dreads the likelihood of meeting her death as a missionary in India, her bigger dread is the insensitive life assured as a result of marriage to St. John. Jane observes that his demanding and excessively concrete nature would asphyxiate her, and further the truth that they are not at all in love with each other brands this thought of matrimony completely unbearable.
6. It seems as if the central conflict of Jane Eyre is mainly concerned with Jane struggling to proclaim her individuality and independence in spite of the common concord of the time and regardless of the relentless efforts of the people around her to frame her conduct to their personal outlooks, particularly as a woman. To some extent the main conflicts as depicted in Jane Eyre can be pointed down to man vs. society. However, many individual clashes befall during the course of the novel but it appears that to its core, the book is mainly about Jane defining and clinging to her personal morals in a world of people that repetitively maltreat her and attempt to form her conduct to fit their resolutions. It appears flawed to assert that Jane's inner conflict about her association with Rochester is actually the central conflict of the story since she doesn't indeed appear to feel much diverged about it. When Jane is able to realize that it is not possible to marry Rochester, as he is previously married, she recognizes instantly that it is not possible for her to stay with him. Nevertheless, all through the book, Jane catches herself in conflict with numerous additional characters. Her aunt Reed is a two-faced and horrible lady who gives a kind of pain to Jane and also expresses wicked lies about



her to Mr. Brocklehurst; at that moment Mr. Brocklehurst tries to make life of Jane problematic and despondent, at Lowood by offering her as an evil ingrate. At that juncture, she must decline Rochester when he wishes her to stay and be his concubine after the exposure of Bertha's survival is made. Later, Jane skirmishes with St. John Rivers who will merely accord to take her abroad as a missionary if she will get married to him, for it is the simply socially suitable mode for her to go and therefore Jane essentially declines this chance even though in a way she extremely wishes to consent to it. It is actually the concept of others and what actually is "best" for her which she must contest in contrast during the course of the wholeness of the novel. It is very much evident in her association with the distressed character of Mr. Rochester. She wishes badly to support him. She somehow falls in love with him and is interested to wed him. However, when she learns that he is wedded, even though to a disturbed wife, Jane cannot stop with Rochester, though she undoubtedly loves him. Her skirmishes are both internal as well as external. After leaving him, Jane attempts to forget Rochester and decides to move on with her life. When St. John Rivers suggests, once again, Jane fails to disregard her integrity: she does not feel any kind of love for him, so she refuses. Then Jane overhears Edward's voice on the wind as if calling to her, a component of the paranormal. She proceeds to Thornfield to find that it is completely devastated by fire and Bertha, the reason of it, too expired. Now Jane and Edward both can plan to initiate a life together thereby resulting in providing the solution to the main source of Jane's conflict in the story which seems to have been resolved towards the end.

7. On the commencement of nearly every section in Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, an idealistic account of the natural settings has been used to build a temperament for the subject at hand. An attempt has been made to tie nature closely with the Idealist's demonstration of a character's internal emotional state. When and where certain involvements will take place has been planned pretty considerably and thoughtfully to bring out the story of Jane. The location, indoors, is also significant to indicate to the reader the mood and power of a situation. For instance, the most disturbing involvement of her childhood takes place in a blood red, deadly, and enigmatic room that wounds her for life. While on the other side the proposal of Rochester's



ensues on a luminous day in the garden. Unfortunately, immediately after the proposal, nature seems to give a sort of warning to Jane by turning dusky and pouring; and actually, a sculpture in the garden where he happened to propose is hit by lightning subsequently. Symbols taken from the natural and supernatural elements are literary techniques that assist to create tension, offer a sense of enigmatic, and prefigure future proceedings.

Bronte makes use of intense imagery during the course of the novel to fit us in a scene. We can clearly for example imagine the young Jane, concealed in the window scene behind dense curtains, and we can also visualize the plate decorated with a partridge that she adores. Bronte also excellently makes use of imagery to produce a constant dissimilarity between passionate warmth and emotive tranquil. At the pinnacle of her passion, Jane is put under lock into the blaze-like red room. The name of Helen Burns fetches to our mind fire imagery, while the name of Miss Temple invokes an image of the calm marble of a Greek temple. The pitiable fallacy transpires when the weather or external scene replicates the internal emotive state of a character. The pathetic fallacy arises into play regularly. One more example follows when Jane encounters Rochester for the first time. It is "dusk," the time of evolution between day and night, and Jane is in a cosmos, a road close to the border of the Thornfield estate. Like the borderland time and space, she inhabits, meeting Rochester is a flash on the border between past and present of a transformed life for Jane.

8. Jane Eyre has been depicted as a sturdy female character through the novel by visualizing evidently distinct goals and clinging to them. In spite of society in which womenfolk inhabit a secondary role, Jane however succeeds to remain definitely in control of her personal life, remaining true to herself, whatever prosecutions and misfortunes she is enforced to tolerate. Jane Eyre is a narrative that tracks young Jane who is actually an orphan staying with her aunt while adjusting to life in a miserable boarding school and accepts her first position as a governess in a neighboring family estate. Subsequently discovering ease in her position and later dropping in love with the proprietor of the estate, appalling disclosures force her to escape the home and search for a new life. Eventually, she is reunited with her love, Edward Rochester, but before that she demonstrates her individual freedom and realizes the worth of



her personal standpoint. Jane displays her strong point during the course of her journey. As a child, she takes courage to stand up for herself when her cousins mistreat her and tell lie about her to their mother. This persistence upon the reality paradoxically gets her the status of being a liar, and her aunt, as well as her teacher at Lowood, dooms her for not being extra obedient. Whereas at Lowood, Jane chances to meet Helen, a sickening fellow student who explains to her the price of compassion and humbleness on the surface of unfairness by presenting Jesus as an instance of the supremacy of love over revenge. After the death of Helen, Jane bestows herself to replicate Helen's temperament, and in the remains of the novel, she is strikingly more reticent in her passions, though she is no less stubborn. After leaving Lowood Jane becomes a governess at Thornfield Hall, she gets in love with Edward Rochester, an elder well-off man who has experienced the involvements with numerous diverse types of women. When their affiliation initiates, Jane displays herself to be more than an award to Rochester, refusing his extravagant gifts and absurd pet names and claiming on his esteem and contemplation. Her determination is powerfully confirmed when she realizes that Rochester has not only been formerly wedded but his spouse is still alive in an undisclosed room in the very house where she has been employed. Rochester provides her every single enticement to discard convention, cast-off religion, throwaway convention, and scrap the sentiments of her friends at Thornfield. He pleads with her to stay with him and to be his companion in all possessions even though they cannot be lawfully wedded. Jane picks in its place to leave Thornfield out of reverence for herself and consequently she runs away, slithering out of the window at night-time in quest of a new life. With no visions of work or somewhere to live, she endeavors out, believing God to escort her. In her fresh situation, Jane is supported by certain friendly outsiders, whom she later on realizes them to be her missing relatives. One of them, St. John Rivers, proposes to wed her. But this would turn out to be a nuptial of suitability, a manner for them to walk together undertaking missionary work without any contribution of passionate attachment lest the Lord stimulated some love between them. This creates repulsion in Jane. She is still precisely very passionate, even if Rivers has not observed up till now, and the notion of an insensitive marriage goes contrary to all she expects for herself. She discards River's proposal, over again asserting on her



outlook rather than succumbing to a man who desires to modify her. This choice stimulates her to return to Thornfield and to Rochester, whose wife is now no more. They are capable to wed, and her obligation to her morals is remunerated with an affectionate, contented marriage.

9. The culmination of the story where Jane and Rochester marry each other is happy and bitter-sweet. It appears to be bitter-sweet since Rochester has been knocked out by the Thornfield fire, losing his hand as well as his vision. He is no more the threatening Byronic hero. Jane, also, has gone through a sequence of sobering involvements. It is, nevertheless, these mellowing understandings that make it probable for Jane and Rochester to lead a contented marriage. They get married on the grounds of an authentic foundation, for Bertha is now dead. No doubt, Rochester is incapacitated, but his incapacities permit the two to have a compassionate wedding founded on shared equality. If Jane, the deprived, silent, reliant former governess had wedded Rochester when he was "whole," then it would have appeared to an unfit association, with Rochester in control and power but now Rochester seems to be as reliant (or more) on Jane as she is on him. No doubt, they do have a contented and happy marriage, full with a profounder, gloomier, more established happiness than that possibly experienced by lighthearted young people in the first phases of passion. They escalate each other entirely the more as they equally have writhed. They have both understood by now what it looks like to feel isolated and miserable. Bronte gives the impression to be commenting in a way on patriarchy in suggesting that man prerequisites to be incapacitated in some way for an equivalent marriage to take place.
10. Jane Eyre presents itself as a Gothic romance by displaying that it has an outstandingly original and progressive heroine, Bertha; Jane weds Rochester regardless of the class barricade between them. But at the same time it is also a realistic novel, which recognizes female yearning and displays the heroine getting married only for love. The novel is both realist as well as romantic in the sense that it carefully portrays the tough, definitely neglected life of a deprived, orphaned servant girl in Victorian periods, but at the same time



also displays her marrying the sweetheart of her life, even though he is significantly older and of a sophisticated social status. Such kind of nuptial would not have taken place in actual Victorian England where class barricades were unyielding; this kind of unlikelihood has its place to the dominion of romance only. Other flamboyant traces in the novel comprise the Gothic mad character of Bertha, Rochester's first wife. Nonetheless the novel can also be look upon as realistic in the sense that it intensely accepts the survival of female yearning, which numerous novels of that time were not ready to accept, it has a courageous self-confident heroine at the center, whose personality has been well developed unlike the flawless, emotionalized female figures that inhabited many other Victorian novels.

11. St. John Rivers and Mr. Rochester have certain things in common in spite of the point that they are very dissimilar characters. Edward Rochester is a well-off man, who possesses Thornfield Hall and a countless deal of land. He does not have any existing parents or siblings. Mr. Rochester is an elderly man with shady features, who "is nearly forty." Mr. Rochester is very much in love with Jane. He loves her intensely and ardently and concerns her as his equal. He is focused towards her, and he is choral about his fondness for her. He is not an excessively pious and religious man. On the other hand, St. John is not a rich man. He has two sisters, Mary and Diana. He is a younger as compared to Rochester. St. John proposes to Jane, but does not actually adore her. He desires to wed her for concrete and practical reasons only. He contemplates that she will become an outstanding missionary's wife. When St. John proposes, Jane admits to herself that "he will never love her but he shall approve" of her. St. John is an extremely religious and pious man and he plans to become a missionary. The character of Mr. Rochester is frequently related to fire. He and Jane repeatedly communicate alongside a thriving fire. Jane protects him when his room is ignited with fire. Later, his personal house burns down and he lost his vision during the fire. He displays himself to be a fervent person and demonstrates warmness to Jane, whereas St. John is frequently related with cold. The weather is emotionless when Jane makes friends with St. John. He is an icy person, and does not express cordiality to Jane. Both Mr. Rochester and St. John are interested in marrying Jane. Mr. Rochester is pulled down by Jane when she



discovers about his crazy wife. Further, St. John's proposal is also turned down by Jane when she rubbishes his wish to marry her, and expresses to him that she perceives her association with him as more of a sisterly one. Both of them attempt to persuade her to transform her mind.

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

<http://www.bronte.org.uk/>

<http://www.bronteparsonage.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.online-literature.com/brontec/>

<http://www.victorianweb.org/>

<http://www.haworth-village.org.uk/brontes/charlotte/charlotte.asp>



<b>Subject: Literature and Gender (Part-I) ( Option-i)</b>	
<b>Course Code: 305 (i)</b>	<b>Author: Dr. Punam Miglani</b>
<b>Lesson No: 02</b>	<b>Editor: Dr. Punam Miglani</b>
<b>A Room of One's Own: Virginia Woolf</b>	

## STRUCTURE

### 2.0 Learning Objectives

#### 2.1 Introduction

##### A Brief about the Author

### 2.2 Main Body of the Text: A Room of Ones' Own

#### 2.2.1 Plot of the Text

#### 2.2.2 Setting of the Text

#### 2.2.3 Analysis of the Text

#### 2.2.4 Characters:

##### The Narrator

##### Judith Shakespeare

##### Mary Beton

##### Mary Carmichael

### 2.3 Further Main Body of the Text: A Room of One's Own

#### Reading the Book: Chapter wise

#### 2.3.1 Narrative Technique and Writing Style



### 2.3.2 Themes in theText

**Significance of Money**

**Subjectivity of Truth**

**Gender Inequality**

### 2.3.3 Use of Symbols in the Text

### 2.4 Check Your Progress

### 2.5 Summary

### 2.6 Key Words

### 2.7 Self-Assessment Test

### 2.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

### 2.9 Suggested Reading

## 2.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To understand the prevalent twentieth century feminist thought
- To explore the history of women in literature through an uncommon and highly exasperating investigation of the social and material conditions essential for the writing of literature
- To understand the importance of freedom of money leisure time and of own space for women to express their creativity
- To understand the hindrances put forward by the social system in the way of women
- Impact of gender inequality on the writing of women
- The inferior status of women in the light of availability of basic prerequisites to the males and non-availability of the same to females
- To understand presentation of woman as a subject by man without proper understanding of her



## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Virginia Woolf has been invited to speak to a batch of young women intellectuals on the topic of Women and Fiction. The theory put forward by her is that a woman requires "money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction." She will presently make an attempt to display how she has been able to arrive at this decision, resolving that the only method she can convey anything authentic is to narrate her personal experience. Therefore, she assumes the voice of a narrator. Any name or designation of this narrator is insignificant, as she portrays every woman.

The narrator starts by recounting her own day in a college of the fictional university Oxbridge (a combination of Oxford and Cambridge). In an attempt to create her discourse, she grasps a few significant notions and hurries over one of the lawns of the college but is halted by a Beadle, a guard, who apprises her that the particular lawn is booked for Fellows and Scholars. She is prohibited from various other domains in the similar method before leaving for a lunch gathering, where she is motivated by the brilliant discussion among the men and women. Later on she consumes dinner at the fictional women's college Fernham. The food served here is entirely different, plain and simple, the discussion scandalous and boring. Reviewing her day, the narrator discovers that females have been slammed out of education and the monetary and academic inheritance to which males always had and have easy access. The following day, the narrator visits the British Library and discovers that it is entirely a male dominated institution. There are various racks full of books written by men about women, however she identifies enrage as well as inquisitiveness in the men's scholarship. She assumes that females have been a kind of reflector like mirror in which males have always visualized themselves magnified and full of strength, and also that males have utilized their literature as well as knowledge to assert the subservience of women mainly to preserve their own dominance.

While gazing back on the inheritance of women writers, the narrator discovers that there are scarcely any details about the life of any normal and average woman, what she accomplished, what she



admired and so on. Therefore, she creates the tale of William Shakespeare's sister, Judith Shakespeare, a lady with the capability for brilliance; however, who is definitely not efficient to write a word and concludes by executing suicide since the society is constructed against women.

But presently, the narrator advocates it is feasible for females to write. The narrator classifies the chronicle of female writers and their impact on each other. With every inception, females should become capable of writing the "incandescent" poetry which Shakespeare could succeed to attain. But the collection of literature created by females so far is filled with embittered, perverted writing, tales that are incompetent to emerge above the deprivation and restrictions inflicted on their gender and as well as on their freedom.

After furnishing this history, Woolf discharges her character and evaluates how she will finish her speech with a motivating roar to an action. She stimulates the women of Newnham and Girton colleges; her spectators, to produce a sort of heritage for their daughters. She thinks that stories are for the ordinary good, not only the personal good, that there is something comprehensive and influential and good in it, and therefore she stimulates them all to express themselves in their writing voraciously. She creates the portrayal of Judith Shakespeare lying deceased, concealed under the lanes of a poverty stricken borough of London, but pronounces all is not extinct for this appalling character. As the poets never actually perish, but are reenacted and offered existence by others, the females in their spectators have a chance to bring Judith to existence and produce the chronicle that Judith never had.

### **A BRIEF ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Virginia Woolf was born in a reputed literary family. At a very young age Virginia Stephen began to become a crucial fraction of London's literary arena. All eight siblings lived with their parents and a number of servants at 22 Hyde Park Gate, Kensington. Prolonged summer break was spent in St Ives, Cornwall, and St. Ives contributed a lot in aiding Virginia's imagination. It happened to be the setting for her novel, *To the Lighthouse*, in spite of its apparently being set on the Isle of Skye. London and St. Ives furnished the principal settings of most of her novels.



She got married to the writer Leonard Woolf and with his collaboration, she established the Hogarth Press in 1917, which was responsible for publishing all of her later novels as well as the works written by T.S. Eliot along with other literary masters of the time. Jointly, Virginia and Leonard Woolf became a section of the prominent Bloomsbury Group, which also included E.M. Forster, Duncan Grant, Virginia's sister, Vanessa Bell, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot.

Virginia Woolf's creations are closely associated with the evolution of feminist condemnation, but she was also a prominent writer in the modernist movement. She brought a revolution by writing the novel with stream of Consciousness, which permitted her to portray the inmost lives of her characters in all too familiar aspects. In *A Room of One's Own* Woolf writes, "We think back through our mothers if we are women. It is useless to go to the great men writers for help, however much one may go to them for pleasure." Woolf's experimental trial with prose pronounced an extensive withdrawal from the traditional Victorian novel and produced fresh and unconventional probabilities for the novelistic structure. Her works like *Mrs. Dalloway*, *The Waves*, and *To the Lighthouse*, are said to be widely prominent till today. Subsequently, the untimely demise of her parents and sister, Woolf underwent periodical nervous breakdowns all through her life and, in 1941, dreading another collapse; she drowned herself in the River Ouse.

## **2.2 MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT**

### **2.2.1 PLOT OF THE TEXT**

This essay has been divided into six chapters. The narrator initiates by fabricating what is explained by her as a 'minor point', which depicts the title of her essay: 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.' She keeps on moving to define that a legacy providing yearly five hundred pounds offering a sort of financial liberty to a woman is more valuable and significant than women procuring the vote (It was in 1928 only that women had achieved totally equivalent franchise to men in the year when Woolf delivered her lectures).

Woolf acquires a fictitious character named 'Mary Beton', and delivers speech to her spectators as well as readers by utilizing this identification. This name owns its origin in an ancient Scottish ballad generally recognized as either 'Mary Hamilton' or 'The Four Marys' and regards Mary Hamilton, a



lady in wait of becoming the Queen of Scotland. Mary becomes expectant by the King, but assassinates the infant and is afterwards punished to be executed for her offence. 'Mary Beton' happens to be one of the three Marys in the ballad. Woolf assesses the methods by which women have been kept out from social and political establishments all over the history, proving her point by perceiving that she, being a woman, had no chance to get any kind of approach to a document preserved inside all male dominated colleges at 'Oxbridge'

Next, Woolf diverts her thoughts to what has been written about women, and attains the clear perception that in order to show their superiority in the field of education and literature, men try to depict women in a particular way to present them very successfully as second class citizens. The next step of Woolf is to assess what has been written by women themselves about them. At this particular point only in *A Room of One's Own* Woolf creates a fictitious sister of Shakespeare, who is named 'Judith Shakespeare' by Woolf.

Woolf summons us to visualize that this fictitious sister of William Shakespeare was gifted with the similar brilliance and capabilities worthy to become a considerable writer like her brother. But she is kept away from the freedom and possibilities available to her brother, education from Grammar school, an opportunity to become an actor in London, along with a scope to earn livelihood in the Elizabethan theatre.

On the contrary, for being a woman the doors of these great establishments would be closed for 'Judith Shakespeare' Woolf puts forward this point in reaction to the claim of the people that no female writer as prominent as Shakespeare has ever been born; but this declaration omits the significant fact that great writers are not only born but they are made also, and also that in the times of Shakespeare there were certain women enjoying the same freedom as well as opportunities.

'Judith the character created by Woolf happens to be seduced by an actor-manager in the play houses of London resulting in her pregnancy thereby, because of poverty and lots of sufferings she commits suicide.

Then Woolf takes a turn to a study of existing writings of women appraising such authors as Jane Austen and Emily Brontë as well as Aphra Behn considered to be the first professional female writer in



England, who according to Woolf deserved to be appreciated by all women for exhibiting that to become a professional woman writer could also be a reality.

In the seventeenth century, the writing of Behn provided a sort of significant development for all women 'for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds.' Previously due to various restrictions women writers felt insecure in the male dominated world of literature resulting in a sort of a 'flaw' in their work. But in the nineteenth-century, authors like Austen and George Eliot were very much 'trained' in observing the society enabling them to produce the novels about the world which way known to them.

Jane Austen either covered her manuscripts with a piece of blotting paper or used to hide them. The training which was received by women in the nineteenth century in literature was character observation and evaluation of emotions. She had been able to educate her comprehension for centuries by the impacts she had experienced in the common sitting-room. Everything from the personal relations to the feelings of the people happened before her therefore when women from the middle class started writing, they succeeded in writing novels.

But it had its own restrictions. The brilliance of Emily Bronte's was more suitable to poetic plays as compared to novels, while George Eliot would have been more successful as a biographer and historian as compared to a novelist. Therefore, in a way females had to stoop their abilities into a form which was more acceptable to society and during this time it was nothing more than writing novels.

Woolf makes an attempt to differentiate these novelists of nineteenth-century women with women novelists of today (i.e., the 1920s). She considers a latest novel, *Life's Adventure* by Mary Carmichael, where novels as well as writer both are created by Woolf to put forward her point. Some silently rebellious features comprising the presentation of friendship between women are observed by her in this novel. Where as, in previous novels women had been viewed only in connection with men e.g., as wives, daughters, friends, or mothers. Woolf culminates by asserting that actually, the perfect writer has nothing to do with gender, he should try to have qualities of both the genders on emotional and psychological grounds. The writers should make an effort to understand both the genders and



should stop writing as only male or female which will permit writers to enclose the complete domain of human sentiments and experience.

### 2.2.2 SETTING OF THE TEXT

While reading the book we notice that as readers we don't get any chance to stroll about much in *A Room of One's Own*. We just go through meager campuses outside London, move into the library, and then pass the remaining time in Mary Beton's apartment, flipping through books and glancing out of the window. Actually as the essay proceeds further, our setting gets narrower, firstly the traditional world of the campuses, then to the library, followed by a room in the apartment of the narrator. Physically the space is very small to explain and express the enormous subject of *Women and Fiction* but we find that mentally the range of journey is very wide. We happen to visit Judith Shakespeare in Elizabethan England, sit at Lady Winchilsea's writing desk, and contemplate pure "reality".

Apart from going out of town to visit Oxbridge University and Fernham College, Mary gets a chance to spend her time in London. But London as a setting is significant because it's buzzing with people and images. Even if Mary is merely gazing out of the window at falling leaves and people getting into the taxi cabs, it means that she is immersing in the city.

### 2.2.3 AN ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK

This essay written by Woolf though a creation of nonfiction, displays the identical creative talent that we observe in her work of fiction: her assumption of the personality of Mary Beton, her commencement, her essay and her creative fabrication of narrative and chronicle into her 'argument' entirely, in one way, execute the two-sided or 'androgynous' perspective to writing which, she presumes, all writers should try to endeavour. The essay *A Room of One's Own* is both logical, straightforward reasoning and twisting narration, both fatally important and mischievously amusing; both entirely irritating and, in some aspects, entirely conservative. During the whole course, Woolf gives specific attention not only to the social restrictions on the lives of women but to the earthly ones also. This is the reason that the line which furnishes her creation of essay with its title, 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction,'



‘Judith Shakespeare’, the invented sister of William Shakespeare, had never been able to become a great writer since the economic provisions for females were not concentrated on providing them education so as to make them capable of earning their livelihood for their families, but only on preparing them for getting married and to fulfill their duties as mothers. Their whole existence was designed around marriage as one of the most fundamental financial and concrete affairs for their survival because it was only by getting married to a man, woman was able to achieve monetary guarantee. So at that time, at least until the late nineteenth century when the “Married Women’s Property Act was introduced into English law, the woman would generally have neither ‘a room of her own’ nor ‘money.’”

Therefore, due to this focus on the mundane restrictions on women, which consequently stop them from obtaining the experience, any kind of schooling, or any sort of resources needed to become considerable writers, *A Room of One’s Own* is usually explained as a ‘feminist’ creation. This tag is basically correct, however it should be observed that Woolf’s belief about writings of woman divides relatively from that of several other feminist authors and critics.

Woolf’s proposal in particular that authors should endeavour to be ‘androgynous’ has invited condemnation from later feminist experts since it contradicts the notion that ‘women’s writing’ and ‘women’s experience’ are apparent and different from men’s. If women certainly are taken as second class citizens in a male dominated society, then certainly their encounters with the society is decidedly unlike the experiences of men, and they require what Elaine Showalter called ‘a literature of their own’ and also a room of their own. Afterwards, feminist philosophers such as the French theorist Helene Cixous, have proposed that there is a feminine writing (*écriture féminine*) which seems as a substitute to a more ‘masculine’ sort of writing: whereas masculine writing is about establishing a truth out of logical and reasonable, profane features but feminine writing is about the ‘spiritual’ or intellectual details of daily living, the fantasy and interval, the apparently ‘unimportant’ moments we encounter in our everyday lives. It is also more twisting, less teleological or apprehensive with a conclusion which can be marriage, some death or a sort of decision than conventional male writing.

To be specific, not knowing how much fiction has been written by Woolf in this manner and might consequently be pronounced as *écriture féminine*, one is surprised, to which extent her reasoning in *A Room of One’s Own* has been carried out from her personal fiction. Possibly the reply is found in the novel Woolf which had been printed soon before she started writing *A Room of One’s Own*: her novel



Orlando of 1928 where the heroine transforms gender during the course of the entire novel as she travels through three centuries of history. Certainly, if one desired to examine any one creation in fiction by Woolf along with *A Room of One's Own*, Orlando might be the perfect option.

## 2.2.4 CHARACTERS

### VIRGINIA WOOLF

Woolf, undoubtedly, has not been depicted as a character in her speeches but by fabricating a narrator to convey the volume of her lecture, she somehow in a way precisely expresses her own part as writer and devices a sort of segregation between herself as an author and the intentions of the narrator, and also the significance of fiction in conveying essential involvement as she depends on the narrator to convey these notions preferably than discharging this duty herself. No doubt, Woolf originally launches the narrator in the very beginning of the lecture but then steadily towards the end of the novel takes over the responsibility over herself from the narrator to furnish concluding remarks.

### THE NARRATOR

In order to express her tale and put forward her discussion, Woolf creates a narrator who according to her could be any female "call me Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please, it is not a matter of any importance," she utters. The narrator leads as well as counsels the spectator along with reader optically and rationally through a sequence of occurrences in which she comes to realize why and how females have been deprived. The invisibility of the narrator along with her capability to console not only with females but with males also provides her a feeling of power and, at the same moment, a feeling of existing as an individual relatively than being a female, an opinion she guides her audience to presume if they desire to become fine authors.

### JUDITH SHAKESPEARE

She is a fictitious sister of William Shakespeare who has been generated by Woolf to convey how a female possessing aptitude and genius equal to Shakespeare, due to the system and construction of the society, would not be able to attain the identical success. The life of Judith was full of catastrophe, at first primarily persuaded by her family into an untimely wedding, she essentially required absconding to London to unbind herself to follow art, but she has to face refusal full of contempt at every theatre, she



tries to approach. Somehow she gets expectant, resulting in making her life of writing almost unfeasible, and ultimately she assassinates herself. But afterwards in the essay, Woolf develops the apparition of Judith Shakespeare and tells the young females that they all hold the influence to reflect the voice that Judith could never possess.

### **MARY BETON**

She is the aunt of the narrator after whose death the narrator gets a handsome remittance of five hundred pounds annually. This allowance has made the life of narrator very comfortable and financially secure, which has made her learn and realize the significance of money and also the reason behind intellectual suffering and creative as well as material poverty of the women.

### **MARY CARMICHAEL**

She has been presented as the assumed author of a book called "Life's Adventure" which is read by the narrator and is condemned also for its fragmented sentences that are not able to reproduce the genius of sentences, Jane Austen. In Spite of her visible absence of brilliance, Carmichael is able to furnish the narrator with the earliest disclosure of lesbianism which she has visualized in fiction and displays how far considerably women and fiction have advanced.

## **2.3 FURTHER MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT: A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN**

### **READING THE BOOK: CHAPTER WISE**

#### **CHAPTER 1**

Woolf was invited to address some female students from the Cambridge colleges of Newnham and Girton on topic "Women and Fiction." She describes how she was able to give a thought to these topics as conveyed in the title "A Room of One's Own" when she started to think about the theme. She appraised what one understands by "Women and Fiction", contemplating that the most fascinating point will be to assess all sides intertwined, comprising female authors and fiction about women.



She shortly discovers that it is not possible for her to provide any truth on the content. She is able to provide only her viewpoint, that a woman requires money as well as a personal room for her if she is supposed to write fiction. She can express what made her come out with this opinion and by going this voyage, her spectators possibly be capable enough to extract their personal conclusions. She decides to make use of the technique of fiction to explain this expedition, as fiction is their theme, and has devised her setting "Oxbridge" from two noticeable settings, Oxford and Cambridge. Furthermore, she has also discovered an "I" expression to narrate the story which could mean any woman, seated on a riverbank close to the college.

The narrator ponders as she is sitting on this bank, regarding the essence of her intellect, how it fastens itself to a notion and engrosses it. One specific notion discriminates itself from the rest and the storyteller attempts to apprehend it, like seizing a fish. This concept turns out to be very thrilling and valuable to her and she endeavours to retain it from sliding away. She discovers herself strolling quickly over a lawn and is shortly caught by a Beadle, a guard, who informs her that only Fellows and Scholars are authorized on the grass. She listens to it and starts walking on the pebbles instead and not still distressed about the injustice of the restrained lawn, but observes that her exquisite "fish" has vanished.

She continues on her path and a specific essay by Charles Lamb flashes in her mind which contemplates how unbelievable it is that there is hardly any change of word in Milton's poetry. She also recounts the essays of Lamb which are placed in a library near to her place of walking and "most perfect" novel of Thackeray Esmond, is also placed there, in full of excitement, she assumes to discover some keys to the writer's intentions in these manuscripts but she is not allowed to do so for being a woman. She is turned away from the Library.

The narrator quits the site in rage. She starts to think what actually should be done but before making any decision she listens to an organ music coming from a neighbouring chapel but this time she is not interested in going there thinking that she will not be allowed, so she just makes an effort to praise people coming and out of the congregation.

She also starts thinking about how due to the continuing surge of money to the Oxbridge men which they get as inheritance and their earnings after graduation, such a magnificent collection of buildings



survive. This finance is used for scholarship and heritage mending and affluence. The college has been able to survive this way only since the very first Kings and noblemen till the contemporary intellectuals. The striking of the clock disturbs the thoughts of the narrator. She proceeds to have lunch at a luncheon party at the college. She details the lavish spread of food and wine considerably, and draws unusual pleasure in explaining that "rich yellow flame" of brilliant, leisurely conversation. Satisfied, after lunch she proceeds to a window seat and observes a cat, walking by the window which prompts her to think of something fundamental missing from the lunch party which she tries to contemplate which leads her to recall the lunch parties held prior to the war in past and is reminded of producing a kind of poetic humming noise which can be put to the verse of Tennyson. And this imagination led her to a burst of laughter which she justified by explaining that it was due to the strange cat which delighted her.

The party is over and the guests proceed to their home. The narrator strolls towards the fictitious women's college "Fernham" and, with enough time before supper, starts thinking again about lines of Tennyson as well as equally alluring verse of Christina Rossetti's. According to the narrator these verses are so attractive since they make us recount past feelings for instance, of past luncheon parties. The logic that contemporary poetry lacks the ability to create similar beauty is since it fails to invoke past memories in the same way. She guesses that possibly it is after war that people have discontinued "humming" at lunch, may be because of the ugliness and foolishness depicted at war. Occupied with the thoughts of the disparity between truth and fantasy, the narrator forgets to take turn to Fernham, the women's college, so she had to retrace her steps.

After reaching Fernham College, the beauty and colours of October in the twilight creates an idyllic temper in the gardens and it is imagined by the narrator that she notices the renowned feminist Jane Harrison. But her thrilling academic trance is disturbed by the coming of her soup for dinner. Just like the lunch she describes her supper also but this meal is found to be as she did with the luncheon, the narrator describes her supper also with magnificent details but this meal is much simpler and there is absence of conversation also.

The narrator along with her friend Mary Seton depart to a sitting room and "repair some of the damages" by making a discussion of people. But at the same time her mind is jinxed by the vision of the labourers and people making money that established and maintained the men's college. She leads the



conversation towards the troubles of the women's colleges. Mary Seton quotes the economic chronicle of her college, which fundamentally involves continuous and depreciated fund raising attempts.

The narrator assesses what were the restraints that stopped their mothers from constructing a kind of inheritance like men, with colleges and scholarships. She discovers that probably it was the family; Mary Seton would be no more and Mary would have been deprived of childhood pleasures if their mothers desired to create a legacy. But, to be hypothetical regarding the legacy created by their mothers would have been futile as it would not have made them capable of earning.

Keeping aside the blame, the narrator and Mary Seton look outside the window at the amazing and motivating building of college, and review the generations of impoverished mothers. She recollects all the visions and feelings of her for the entire day, and how annoying it was to be turned out of the library in the morning, but finally she resolves that she must "roll up the crumpled skin of the day" and rests on the bed.

## CHAPTER 2

Leaving Oxbridge in the past, the narrator finds that the extension to her first address is a call to the British Museum in London, to look for the "essential oil" of factuality. Her Oxbridge day is initiated with a bombardment of queries in her mind about the state of poverty of females, and in order to get response to these elaborate questions, she perceives that she requires the impartial knowledge of books.

She approaches through a damp city day to the entrance of the library and while entering she notices the stretch of Library under the dome possessing all the knowledge under it full of all the books written by men and bearing hardly any book written by woman and the huge amount of books were spell bound. She realizes that all the books written by different kind of men have mainly woman as tier subject.

On the topic of men under the letter M, she notices the absence of women. The question arises in her mind why men would be repeatedly keen to write on women and chooses various volumes for her assignment. But she discovers that in contrast to the young researcher succeeding her, who mutters with contentment on finding the hint of truth after every few minutes, she was not well educated. Many questions puzzle her mind. The record of subjects concerning poverty of women appears infinite and ceaselessly desolate.



The narrator observes fascinating paradox in the opinion of these male writers on the subject of women. While some are of the view that women lack character, whereas according to some they are the peak of compassion. Therefore, it is difficult to explain this disparity. In the meantime, she also observes that her records and notions are dispersed and badly constructed. She ponders that she might as well have abandoned the books unopened since she has failed to draw any conclusions. But she has been able to make a drawing on her paper of a particular professor, piercing the paper with anger.

The narrator notices that she has in a way conveyed her personal annoyance in this portrayal, and attempts to detect the source of his anger. She recollects that its origin is the heading of the manuscript of professor "the mental, moral and physical inferiority of the female sex". While gazing throughout the library, visualizing an unappealing family of male scholars, she senses uselessness and unjustness at being anticipated inferior. She feels relaxed to realize the origin of her rage, but still thinks about the source of the professor's anger. She calculates that all the books written on the subject of women have been written in the "red light of emotion" and not the "white light of truth" and regards them futile for her motives.

Still engrossed with the subject of male anger, the narrator quits the library to have lunch at a restaurant. While eating, she goes through a newspaper. It is full of headlines depicting the "inferiority" of women, men realizing every part in politics as well as sport and the women downgraded. The male anger is expressed here also in spite of having evident authority.

The narrator contemplates that probably it has something to do with the power that they possess which makes them angry in an attempt to maintain confidence in superiority, they continuously put in their efforts to make women feel more inferior which brings in more fresh light various junctures in her life, which have annoyingly upset males by their feminism. She concludes that women have most probably served as a magnifying mirror for males to visualize their magnitude and significance and if women begin revealing the truth, men will visualize themselves shrank and improper.

Her apprehensions are disturbed by the waiter offering her the bill for lunch. She gets a chance to explain her monetary situation to her spectators. She further explains that she lives a very comfortable life because of the annual allowance of five hundred pounds which she inherited from her aunt Mary Beton which makes her live independently without any male support. The news was received by her on



the same day when the right to vote was announced to women but for her this money was more important as it provided her more independence than the right to vote.

The occupations performed by women are usually monotonous and laborious and draws such amounts of money which in a way improves the temperament of the narrator because of the stable incoming she is having and also makes her think sympathetically of men. She thinks that probably, men also might have received defective educations. According to her, both genders are pushed by impulses which are beyond their power. Actually she realizes that her independence due to yearly five hundred has provided her the capability to visualize objects as they are, without any preconception or belief.

The narrator proceeds to home, where "domesticity prevailed", where the painter as well as maid were working hard. In her current position of mind, the narrator thinks that in modern days the comparative worth of these professions has changed which makes it impossible to consider any profession better. Now she estimates that within the time of a hundred years, the condition of women's jobs will be very unlike again, a disclosure which has countless suggestions for all sorts of females and fiction.

### CHAPTER 3

The narrator comes back home, feeling disheartened that she has not been able to discover any ounce of truth to describe the poverty of women in comparison to men. She feels the need of a historian, to document facts, to explain the condition of women through the lens of history. She takes into account the Elizabethan period of literature, which is swarming with renowned men like Shakespeare but lacks any account of lives of women. She explains fiction as delicately connected to life as a spider-web and, in the case of Shakespeare, nearly subtle.

The narrator consults the book again, this time a History of England, and discovers merely few facts about women and that too with the involvement of men in one way or another over the period of centuries, and still women were in possession of good personality as claimed by the historian as the Shakespeare's plays are full of female characters; Cleopatra, Desdemona. There is an interesting variability depicted in the female sex. As far as imagination is concerned she is presented as amazing and diverse where as in life and in history, she has been presented as the possession of her husband and fundamentally invisible. In order to get the real picture of this woman, one should take into



consideration history and poetry, but no such history of Elizabethan woman is written that will furnish this outlook.

There is a need to gather all the absent facts about her eating habits, about what she did, and the narrator proposes that some young woman from the audience to complete this task because it appears absurd to put any question about women and fiction in the Elizabethan age, without having any knowledge about women themselves. According to Trevelyan, the writer of the History of England, most of the girls used to get married by the age of sixteen, and so according to the narrator it was entirely impossible for them to write the plays. She creates a woman, Judith Shakespeare, sister of Shakespeare, to examine what would have emerged if a woman possessed the talents of Shakespeare. While William was enjoying education at school, hunting, performing as an actor and writer at a London theatre, his sister having the same talents and brilliance stayed at home, repairing clothes and under the compulsion of her family to get married at early age.

In order to save her father from disappointment, she was compelled to discreetly pack away to flee her marriage and run away to London but after reaching there she was giggled away from the theatre for being a woman. But one actor-manager pitied her and consequently she got pregnant by him making her chances of writing bleak and leading her to commit suicide. This is the imagination of the narrator about her plight.

In fact, according to the narrator a woman like Judith, possessing all Shakespeare's talents, would never have been there. But females must have possessed a kind of brilliance of their own. And such women might have been blazed for witchery or evaded by their communities with prospective for writing. She believes "Anon" (i.e. "Anonymous") was possibly a woman. She thinks that it is definite that any female born with such kind of talent and brilliance would definitely have become insane or desolated. If Judith had been alive, her creations would have been "twisted and deformed" and consequently she definitely would have impersonated herself as Anon or taken a male name. According to her, it is not as convenient for women to pursue popularity like men.

It is very much clear that women poets went through a tormented and distressed state of mind. But the state of mind of males would have been different. Though we understand that Shakespeare was ideal for poetry when he settled down to write King Lear, we actually don't have any idea about it. With the



passage of time it has become very clear to us from the, writers' personal memoirs and diaries, that creating a work of art was a difficult task which would have suffered badly because of any kind of disturbance but such kind of disturbance and distractions are common for women.

She entrusts the psychologists of Newnham and Girton to discover the result of dejection on an artist and how it is required to nourish them to enable them to write. Definitely a number of male writers have different viewpoints on the topic. One Oscar Browning, a teacher at women's college was of the belief that even the finest educated woman was secondary to the substandard man. In contrast to present scenario in the past time these opinions ruled.

We return to the requirement of men to feel superior. But the tale of women's liberation is more intricate than that, full of examples of politically-minded women evading their own beliefs. No doubt, present women now enjoyed their rooms and ordinary dinners, the past women "cried out in agony", since people with brilliance are always the most affected by the viewpoints of others.

This is specifically harmful for an artist, because to generate fine poetry as by Shakespeare, it is required to raise above all barriers and hindrances and be "incandescent". The fact that we are least aware about the state of mind of Shakespeare is, an important affirmation of his incandescence; his poetry "flows from him free and unimpeded."

## CHAPTER 4

Taking further the description of Shakespeare's 'incandescence', the narrator depicts how it's nearly unfeasible for a woman to hold the same talent. She tells them to have a look at the presentation of women through history in confined rooms that would never motivate fiction.

But she also agrees that women of higher status hold superior luck. The reaction of men is more positive to writing a countess than writing a working class mother as countesses and ladies are financially freer but they had to confront scorn and risk "being thought a monster". She offers the instance of Lady Winchilsea, a childless virtuous woman, who wrote poetry but failed to communicate the incandescence of male writers since her poems were filled with resentful pungent lines about how women are "debarred from all improvements of the mind" and so on. Among these resentments is fine, alluring poetry, but it is undermined by annoyance.



The narrator is visualizing what kind of comforts and testing has been undergone by Lady Winchilsea because there is very little information about it. Her lines reflect gloominess but she was probably regarded insignificant by male readers. She was usually mocked by male satirists. One of the satirists called her a "blue stocking with an itch for scribbling." The narrator feels attracted by this thought and desires to have more details so as to build a correct embodiment of Lady Winchilsea.

The narrator now proceeds to the next instance, Margaret of Newcastle, who, just like Lady Winchilsea, was also a noble and childless woman whose creations depict an even more exposed aggravation. Her poetry seems to be "congealed" and "higgledy-piggledy" when it could have been beautiful, and to add further, she was mocked at by the people around her forcing her to lead an isolated existence until she had notoriety for insanity. Dorothy Osbourne comes next. She acknowledges in her letters that she cannot conceptualize being insane enough to commence writing books. Letters are the expanse of her writing sphere, yet they deceive a skill for sentences.

The narrator pursues her denunciation, now drawing Aphra Behn from the shelf. Behn is different from others. Instead of being a noble woman, she comes from middle-class reflecting middleclass morals of vigour and humour. After facing a certain miserable sequence of events, she lost all money and her husband, thereby bound to earn her own living for which she initiated writing. But just the fact of her holding an occupation at all is far more popular than anything written by her, and instead of presenting herself as a role-model for young women, there was so much of excommunication by society that her example made writing appear like the pursuit of distraught women.

But the purpose of writing for Behn was to earn money and she in a way offered writing as an option of making money for other women, and slowly women writers made their presence felt in the books of history towards the end of the eighteenth century, followed by impartially significant books like *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*, which had the capacity to change the position of women writers by furnishing an extending body of work, just like men who always are blessed with vast body of work by other men to motivate them and offer them with an understanding of collective experience which results in creating good fiction, as claimed by the narrator.

Renowned writers George Eliot and Jane Austen ought to "let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn", because of the freedom they enjoy. By the nineteenth century, the shelves of libraries started



stuffing with books of middle-class women but maximum of them were all novels and there was significant absence of poetry. No doubt, these women were very much different from each other, had very different lives and voices but tendency towards the novel was the same. According to the theory of the narrator, despite the common distractions in life, it is possible for women to write novel than poetry.

The narrator describes that women of the middle class had been tutored for centuries to write novels, by observing and understanding much of human actions, manners and emotions, but Austen, the Brontes, and Eliot were not basically novelists, their abilities shaped. The narrator believes them out for poetry and history. The narrator believes that Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is a good novel, despite the fact that Austen wasn't delighted with the writing and used to conceal the document when she heard anyone arriving but when you get a chance to go through the novel, it appears as if Austen has become incandescent like Shakespeare, has abandoned herself in a way. Probably, because Austen had no desire for the freedom of men and that her fiction was suitable to her situation.

But Charlotte Bronte develops a very different kind of relationship to her written voice. The narrator refers to a passage from *Jane Eyre*, revealing how disillusioned and frustrated the story is, manifesting how Bronte was incompetent to abandon her personal life while writing. According to the narrator the unhappiest thing about Bronte, is that she had the knowledge how liberty, travel, and education could have been benefited for her and her work, but she was not able to exploit it or get any benefit from those things.

The narrator keeps on exploring the aspects of the novel which are able to stimulate the emotions in the manner that *War and Peace* for instance does, then she thinks that probably it is the shape of the novel and also the potential of its emotional content to display something of life. If the novel contains just moments of reflection but is not able to be an unbridged it "comes to grief".

For her most of the novels come to grief, but adds further that if it has anything to do with the gender of the writer. She believes that the integrity of women writers has been bargained by the sovereignty of men; male ethics reign so it is easier for male writers to reflect real life which has been found nearly unfeasible by women to write without expressing anger, compliance and defensiveness on papers. Only Austen and Emily Bronte had been successful in writing with relentless, stringent female voices, as if they were deaf to the "persistent voice" of the patriarchy.



The narrator refers to a passage from the *New Criterion* emphasizing the way female novelists should write only corresponding to their restrictions. She is astonished to discover that it was written not a century ago but only in 1928. Due to pressure of male opposition was faced by women; the doors of the literary field always remain closed to them. They fail to approach the "common sentence," which men can easily access, the shared tempo and disposition that unifies male writers together.

And obviously this "sentence" guides to entire forms of writing, for instance verse and the drama forms were produced by men and pursued by men. The narrator envisions that as women get unconfined in society, they will be able to unfurl the form of the novel also, and will also be able to discover room for their verse form, or a form as yet to be founded. At this juncture the narrator abandons, with an expectation that in the future, the women will be able to shape forms of writings to their own lives.

## CHAPTER 5

Now the libraries are full of numerous books by women. They have touched all the subjects, all kinds of forms even sometimes philosophical and economic subjects for their writing. Novels are however the chief quest but probably they hold a different impression now, probably now they are craftier and artful and express less struggling of women inside them. To examine further, the narrator unfolds a novel by Mary Carmichael called "Life's Adventure". This was actually a debut hypothetical texts which must be taken as the newest one in a sequence of creations by women, since whole works of fiction breathe as part of their heritage and libraries.

She begins to read Mary Carmichael's novel, and at first discovers that it consists of somehow broken sentences, failing to glide like music as Jane Austen's did. The narrator feels astonished why Mary has advanced against Austen's sentences, if this is a way of protesting against being addressed as "sentimental" like various other women.

She keeps on reading and discovers along with broken sentences. Mary has also "broken the sequence". Again against expectations of the readers, Mary provides something very strange which comes as a surprise when the novel voices "Chloe liked Olivia". At this point the narrator comes to realize that probably it is for the first time that the truth of women liking women has been recognized in the literature. It would have been really unbelievable for any of Shakespeare's heroines to "like" another woman, rather than feeling envy or sisterhood.



It has been discovered that in literature, women have always been assessed in association with men, and it is obvious that men hold very little knowledge of the mind of the female and the women also had very little knowledge about males. Therefore, there is mere literary history bearing a very skewed perception of women. On further reading, the narrator finds that a laboratory is shared by Chloe and Olivia, where they are exploring a remedy for anemia.

The narrator feels amazed when she comes to know that the genius of Mary Carmichael is expressed in her dealing with the next moment, when Chloe observes as Olivia cleans up and makes preparations to leave for home to be with her family. Here, if Mary possessed the accurate lightness of touch, the entire world could be transformed, the chamber of women having fondness for women kindled for the first time. Before reading, the narrator counsels Mary to deal with it subtly, by displaying Chloe focus on something else.

The narrator praises Olivia for her intricacy and feels there is no explanation for applauding same sex for intricacy, since historically the intricacy of women lacks any kind of evaluation and all scientific revelations are from the viewpoint of men. So while praising Olivia for being "infinitely intricate", she fails to examine her definition against the writings of the "great men", despite knowing the fact that most of these men were actually inspired by their wives in such a way that they must have recognized their "intricacy" as rare.

In order to have an absolute vision of female intricacy and creativity and also have the capability of writing about feelings of women when she enters a room, one has to follow into myriads of rooms as there is a great variation in women which has not been recorded till now. Her power of creation is very much different from that of men's creative power and it would really be absurd if she starts following the men's way of writing since in that way we will definitely miss her distinctive world.

Keeping this in mind, the narrator gives a warning to Mary Carmichael that in an attempt to stay outside the perspective of Chloe and Olivia, she is taking the risk of becoming a "naturalist-novelist". There is a boundless material to perceive. The narrator recollects watching an aged working class woman walking at twilight and visualizing the manner woman would throw light on her life. She would recall wars and historic events brawled by men but performing her domestic duties during the similar days would vanish from history. All these unknown, undocumented lives are left to be noticed by Mary Carmichael



if she wants to face or accept any challenge. It is expected of her to record her own soul also, as well as wandering behind the epitome of man and perceiving him for the first time as he has consistently perceived women. The narrator ceases from pursuing to instruct Mary, what should be written by her rather returns to the novel and keeps on reading, expecting to move away from her preconceptions about Mary's shattered sentences. She discovers that even the framework of the novel is also discouraging, consistently guiding her towards something profound and rudimentary but never completely giving it. She definitely doesn't possess the brilliance of Austen, Bronte, or Winchilsea, but, she has definitely possessed something which they never possessed, a self-adequacy, an aloofness to men, which unfolds her work to an impartial sexual inquisitiveness as if she's "forgotten that she is a woman."

As she continues reading, the narrator waits anxiously that Mary Carmichael must display if she desires to prove herself. It is an instance of proceeding profounder into the world of her story, of advancing beyond the superficial facet of appearances. The intellectual class of professors and historians of the male world will be yelling out their suggestions to her but she should divert her concentration. After finishing the novel, the narrator comes to the conclusion that reviewing Mary Carmichael's brilliance, talents and circumstances, she performed well. But in the coming hundred years, she will be able to write a much finer book.

### **2.3.1 NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE AND WRITING STYLE**

A Stream of Consciousness technique has been used by Virginia Woolf to bring forth her argument in "A Room of One's Own." In this essay, Woolf tends to make a comparison between the affluence and benefits of men's colleges to the poor financial condition of women's colleges and claims that absence of finance and room of her own hampers women's capability to attain and create.

Instead of revealing this to the readers and audiences in an uncomplicated and straightforward manner, she exhibits it through Stream of Consciousness. We feel ourselves inside the head of the narrator as she roams through these distinct colleges. For instance, we visualize the first class food, wine and attendants at the men's college and then the mutton and harsh circumstances at the tattered women's college. Providing great details, Woolf displays us how availability of resources and freedom of money offers a kind of liberty to a person to carry on to achieve the height of creativity and intellectual life.



With the help of a technique of manifesting not telling, sieved through the mind of a knowledgeable, brilliant, insightful and angry woman, we observe how many females could achieve if provided rooms of their own and this leisurely, twisting stream-of-consciousness gathering of detail is quite persuasive in this essay.

She also adopts a self-conscious writing style. Usually, writers attempt hard to let the reader forget that the fictitious character created by him is merely words on the page. But here in this particular book, Woolf is originating her imaginary narrator: "call me Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael, or by any name you please—it is not a matter of any importance", because "Mary" is "only a convenient term for somebody who has no real being". And when we arrive at Fernham, Woolf again takes a pause to make us recollect that she's producing this story up: "I dare not forfeit your respect and imperil the fair name of fiction by changing the season." When we are ready to drive back and admire the story, she tries to remind us that she is actually in charge of the whole narrative so she is not going to change the season since it would be annoying to us, but in fact if she desired to change the season she definitely could have. Where usually a writer would directly launch the character, Woolf is more interested in expressing us the inner functioning of fiction than endeavouring to get us to defer incredulity. Primarily, she's drawing back the curtain.

So, while saying that this style is "self-conscious," we don't intend to say that Woolf is timid, or shy. We just want to convey that the style of writing is self-conscious: since while reading we find that, the text keeps on reminding continuously that the reader is just reading a bit of fiction generated by some other person. Now the question arises what does all this have to do with Women and Fiction? Woolf's emphasis on the five hundred pounds received annually. And the private room of own are the very prerequisite and reasonable things that enable fiction-writing attainable. So probably this particular self-conscious style is a sort of practical demonstration of the task of writer. Woolf enacts swift and unsteady with her narrative technique in *A Room of One's Own*, therefore restraining the narrator down is delicate. Virginia Woolf was very much aware of the constraints of a first-person narrator so instead of speaking in her own voice and expressing her own experiences, she chooses Mary Beton.

### **2.3.2 THEMES IN THE NOVEL**

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF MONEY**



According to the narrator of *A Room of One's Own*, money happens to be the main component that stops females from possessing their personal room and therefore it is very significant to have money. As females do not possess power, their creativity has been restrained in all over the ages. The narrator writes, "Intellectual freedom depends upon material things. Poetry depends upon intellectual freedom. And women have always been poor, not for two hundred years merely, but from the beginning of time . . ." She uses this quote to explain why so many females are not growing in writing poetry. She assumes that the writing of novels furnishes itself more smoothly to persistent beginnings and ends, therefore it is more convenient and suitable for females to write novels than poetry. Women must learn to contend with recurrent interference since they are frequently deprived of their personal room where they can write peacefully. In the absence of money, the narrator suggests that women will always tend to hold second position to their creative male counterparts. The monetary inconsistency between men and women during the time of Woolf's writing sustained the misconception that men were more successful writers than women.

### **SUBJECTIVITY OF TRUTH**

In *A Room of One's Own*, the narrator asserts that even history has proved itself to be subjective. What she tries to probe is only "the essential oil of truth," but this dodges her, and she ultimately assumes that no such object survives. The narrator afterwards writes, "When a subject is highly controversial, one cannot hope to tell the truth. One can only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold." To exhibit the notion that viewpoint is the wholly thing that an individual can in reality "prove," she succeeds in fictionalizing her speech, asserting "Fiction is likely to contain more truth than fact." Actually truth in the form of reality is not impartial; it is unforeseen upon the conditions of one's world. With this statement she further entangles her chronicle. Woolf compels her reader to examine the truthfulness of everything she has put forward as veracity so far, and additionally she also informs them that the fictional representation of any narrative comprises more crucial truth than the authentic parts. With this statement she retold the prevailing truths and beliefs of innumerable literary works.

### **GENDER INEQUALITY**

During the course of *A Room of One's Own*, the narrator stresses that females are given unequal attention in the society and that is the reason for their failure in producing less magnificent works in



writing than their male counterparts. In order to justify her point, the narrator produces a female character Judith Shakespeare, the nonexistent twin sibling of William Shakespeare and she perfectly makes use of this character to display systematic discrimination against women. Judith is as gifted as her brother William, whereas his capabilities are acknowledged as well as encouraged by the family and the society, Judith is discouraged and underestimated. No doubt, Judith attempts to write secretly and also feels ashamed of it. She gets engaged at a very young age; and on refusing to get married, is beaten by father and ultimately she kills herself. The narrator creates the unfortunate character of Judith to demonstrate that an equally talented female would have failed to be as successful as Shakespeare. No doubt, Shakespeare is a gifted one but because of unfavourable treatment, a female Shakespeare would have performed quite differently despite possessing equal talent.

### 2.3.3 USE OF SYMBOLS IN THE NOVEL

The crucial aspect of *A Room of One's Own* is that every female is in need of a personal space, something which is within the capacity of the males to relish without question. A room of her own would actually furnish a woman with the time as well as the scope to get involved in undisturbed time for writing. During the days of Woolf, women had scarcely relished these luxuries. These were surely out of reach of women of those days which resulted in the suffering of their art. But for the Woolf this is actually more than the room itself. She utilizes the room symbolically for various substantial matters, such as privacy, recreation time, and monetary sovereignty, and according to Woolf, each of these inequalities are required to be reformed to take women above this level and also to make their literary attainments as a crucial part of the innumerable inequalities between men and women.

## 2.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Illustrate *A Room of One's Own* as an established analytical narrative in feminism.
2. Do you find any relation to a real-world contemporary subject that has some connection to the book?
3. Throw light on how an average woman was depicted in history books before Eighteenth century?



4. According to Virginia Woolf, “a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.” Rationalize this utterance with specific reference to her novel “A Room of One’s Own.”
5. Explain briefly the use of the Stream of Consciousness technique in "A Room of One's Own" by Virginia Woolf.
6. Explain in brief “Interruptions” as depicted by Virginia Woolf in A Room of One’s Own.

## 2.5 SUMMARY

We are informed that in *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf has been given an invitation to give a lecture on the subject of Women and Fiction. She puts forward the theory that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction." Her essay is created as a somewhat fictionalized account of the contemplation that guided her to embrace this thesis. She attempts to dramatize that cognitive proceeding in the character of “non-existent narrator "call me Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please—it is not a matter of any importance. “The narrator initiates her examination at Oxbridge College, where she reviews the incompatible educational experiences accessible to both men and women along with additional material dissimilarities in their lives. She subsequently spends a day in the British Library ensuing the scholarship on women. Shelves were full of writings by men, taking women as a subject, but she discovers anger as well as inquisitiveness in the men's scholarship. Rotating to history, she is able to get very little details about the day to day lives of women. Then she resolves to restore their existence with the help of her imagination. The character of Judith Shakespeare has been created as an instance of the disastrous destiny which an extremely intelligent woman would have encountered under those conditions. By taking into account this sort of background, she appraises the attainment of the great women novelists of the nineteenth century and throws light on the significance of heritage to a prospective writer. A scrutiny of the contemporary plight of literature follows, by going through the reading of the first novel of one of the contemporaries of the narrator. Woolf concludes the essay with motivation to her women audience, to follow the tradition that has been so scarcely entrusted to them, and to expand the foundation for their own daughters.



## 2.6 KEY WORDS

- **Admonish**-counsel in terms of someone's behaviour marked by a desire for wealth and possessions
- **Affectation**-a deliberate pretense or exaggerated display
- **Agog**-highly excited
- **Akimbo**-bent outward with the joint away from the body
- **Androgynous**-having both male and female characteristics
- **Assiduously**-with care and persistence
- **Asunder**- into parts or pieces
- **Audacious**-unrestrained by convention or propriety
- **Avuncular**-resembling an uncle in kindness or indulgence
- **Bounteous**-given or giving freely
- **Cadge**-obtain or seek to obtain by wheedling
- **Caustic**-harsh or corrosive in tone
- **Cameo**-engraving or carving in low relief on a stone
- **Coffer**-the funds of a government, institution, or individual
- **Cogitation**-a carefully considered thought about something
- **Complacently**-in a self-satisfied manner
- **Conciliation**-the act of placating and overcoming distrust and animosity
- **Condescension**-showing arrogance by patronizing those considered inferior
- **Confidante**-a woman or girl to whom secrets can be entrusted
- **Congeval**-solidify, thicken, or come together
- **Congenial**-suitable to your needs



- **Conglomeration**-a sum total of many varied things taken together
- **Deprecate**-cause to seem or feel unimportant; belittle
- **Discourse**-an extended communication dealing with some particular topic
- **Dissipated**-unrestrained by convention or morality
- **Eddy**-flow in a circular current, of liquids
- **Endow**-furnish with a capital fund
- **Eschew**-avoid and stay away from deliberately
- **Exude**-release in drops or small quantities
- **Facetious**-cleverly amusing in tone
- **Farrago**-a motley assortment of things
- **Fleeting**-lasting for a markedly brief time
- **Foible**-a minor weakness or peculiarity in someone's character
- **Fritter**-spend frivolously and unwisely
- **Frontispiece**-an illustration facing the title page of a book
- **Frivolous**-not serious in content, attitude, or behavior
- **Gaudy**-tastelessly showy
- **Geniality**-a disposition to be friendly and approachable
- **Gesticulation**-a deliberate and vigorous motion of the hands or body
- **Halcyon**-idyllically calm and peaceful; suggesting happy tranquility
- **Hortatory**-giving strong encouragement
- **Impediment**-something immaterial that interferes with action or progress
- **Indignation**-a feeling of righteous anger
- **Idiosyncrasy**-a behavioral attribute peculiar to an individual
- **Indite**-produce a literary work
- **Incongruous**-lacking in harmony or compatibility or appropriateness



- **Inextricably**-in a manner incapable of being disentangled or untied
- **Inscrutable**-difficult or impossible to understand
- **Imponderable**-difficult or impossible to evaluate with precision
- **Impute**-attribute or credit to
- **Loquacious**-full of trivial conversation
- **Magnate**-a very wealthy or powerful businessperson
- **Misogynist**-a misanthrope who dislikes women in particular
- **Noxious**-injurious to physical or mental health
- **Palpable**-capable of being perceived
- **Pedagogue**-someone who educates young people
- **Permeate**-spread or diffuse through
- **Pernicious**-exceedingly harmful
- **Peroration**-the concluding section of a rhetorical address
- **Plebeian**-of or associated with the great masses of people
- **Prate**-speak about unimportant matters rapidly and incessantly
- **Prelate**-a senior clergyman and dignitary
- **Prodigious**-great in size, force, extent, or degree
- **Rapture**-a state of being carried away by overwhelming emotion
- **Repose**-the absence of mental stress or anxiety
- **Repute**-look on as or consider
- **Reprehensible**-bringing or deserving severe rebuke or censure
- **Retinue**-the group following and attending to some important person
- **Sacrilege**-blasphemous behavior



- **Sallow**-unhealthy looking
- **Scruples**-motivation deriving from ethical or moral principles
- **Scrupulously**-with extreme conscientiousness
- **Sedulous**-marked by care and persistent effort
- **Serpentine**-resembling a snake in form
- **Severance**-a personal or social separation
- **Shirk**-avoid one's assigned duties
- **Slovenly**-negligent of neatness especially in dress and person
- **Stagnate**-exist in a changeless situation
- **Sonorous**-full and loud and deep
- **Sordid**-morally degraded
- **Squalid**-foul and run-down and repulsive
- **Transient**-lasting a very short time
- **Tribulation**-an annoying or frustrating or catastrophic event  
not diminished or moderated in intensity or severity
- **Venerable**-profoundly honored
- **Virility**- the trait of being manly
- **Voluble**-marked by a ready flow of speech
- **Wastrel**-someone who squanders resources or time

## 2.7 SELF ASSESSMENT TEST

1. Illustrate in brief what Virginia Woolf wants to convey by "A Room of One's Own?"
2. Explain how is Virginia Woolf able to conclude that "A Room of One's Own" is needed?



3. How Virginia Woolf in "A Room of One's Own" explains the society which in an organized way deprived women of formal education. On the basis of the text, explain how English society denied access to women.
4. Shakespeare has been regarded as an icon and has been presented as much more than a man. He portrays something and is often regarded as one of the best writers in the world, or at least in the English language. Which kind of biographical details does Woolf furnish about Shakespeare in her novel A Room of One's Own?
5. Prove that Shakespeare's sister is a fictional character or based on facts and also narrate what happens to her in the narrative.
6. Interpret what Virginia Woolf's "A Room of One's Own" discloses the opinion of its author about the culture to which they belonged.
7. Review the feminist principles depicted in "A Room of One's Own" by Virginia Woolf and also explain how Woolf's ideals affected modern feminist thought?
8. Do you find Virginia Woolf accurate in her presentation of women during the 16th century in "A Room of One's Own"? Was it possible for the women of that time to defeat the social hurdles of that time? Explain with reference to from "A Room of One's Own" either for or against Woolf's opinion.
9. What is the importance of the fictional character Judith Shakespeare as imagined by Virginia Woolf? Explain why the narrator conceptualizes such a character and narrates her story in A Room of One's Own?
10. Why do you feel that "space" is so essential in Woolf's presentation of the lives of women, specifically women writers in the novel A Room of One's Own?

## 2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Throughout the narrative the unequal treatment given to females has been stressed by the narrator. In order to prove her point of gender inequality a character of Judith, an imagined sister of Shakespeare has been created, possessing the same talent as possessed by Shakespeare who is



discouraged and not acknowledged by the family as well as society. She is forced to get engaged at the very young age and ultimately she kills herself. Women are financially insecure which stops them to achieve success. She is confident and happens to live life with comfort due to 500 pounds which she receives annually after death of her aunt. She tries to justify that women are treated as second rate citizens so they are not able to achieve success which they actually deserve. Moreover, due to absence of their room of their own they are interrupted again and again and are not able to become successful writers. So in a way, she tries to discuss various interruptions as well as restrains which stop women from becoming successful writers.

2. Discrimination on the basis of sex till seems to be prevalent in one or other way. No doubt things have become better but there are still some issues. Most of 'A Room of One's Own' is devoted to an examination of the patriarchal English society where women have been provided with restricted opportunities. Woolf depicts that only men are allowed to retain money and also they have been able to provide resources to the libraries and universities which assisted them in gaining power in the very first place; whereas women are not allowed even in the male Libraries without permission or to cross the lawn and have mediocre dinner, less wealth. Woolf makes a comparison of the consequences of the comparative prosperity prevalent in the male and female universities. She compares the sumptuous lunch offered at men's college which arouses pleasing cerebral witticism whereas the ordinary dinner provided at the female college restrains thought. Woolf reclines backwards to Elizabethan times to provide a fictional-historical specimen of sexism: Judith Shakespeare, conceptualized sister of William, undergoes a miserable life of unrecognized genius as society restrains her efforts to exhibit her brilliant. Woolf tries to detect such hurdles in the way of women writers through the modern day; her financial insecurities and absence of any room of her own resulting in various interruptions. She also refers to the topics such as the manly demeaning of female books, topics, and prose style.

3. In the book, A Room of One's Own, Woolf presents a historical reasoning that an absence of money as well as privacy has put barriers in the way of women from writing with brilliance in the past. Due to lack of money, women are solely dependent on men without having any idea of their own in the absence of any sort of privacy. Their freedom to express their thought is obstructed as women obsess themselves with conception of gender. Their emotions like sense of insecurity and anger compel



them to think about themselves rather than about their subjects. Aphra Behn happens to be the first female writer who has been able to draw her personal money from writing. She showed the way for 19th-century novelists like Jane Austen who had been successful to write in spite of the absence of privacy in their family sitting-rooms. Woolf assumes that present time female writers still usually work out of anger or insecurity, but in the coming times money as well as freedom will liberate their minds and their brilliance will find out their way.

Woolf also asserts that men have historically downgraded women as a way of claiming their own superiority. In using the metaphor of a looking-glass alliance, men, endangered by the thought of losing their authority, diminish women to expand themselves. The substantial part of the book is also devoted to scrutiny of the patriarchal English society as restricted opportunities of women. Woolf throws light upon how only men are permitted to have their own money. How they have been able gain power in the universities and institutions whereas, in contrast, the women's university where the narrator gets a chance to stay, had to sweep together financial funds when it was chartered.

4. Woolf frequently emphasizes upon the need of a legacy that needs no commitment and of the solitude providing privacy of one's own room for the development of creative brilliance. She presents a historical reasoning that absence of money as well as privacy has restrained females from writing with brilliance in the foregone time. In the absence of money, women are completely dependent on males and also without having any sort of privacy, continuous interruptions restrain their ability of creativity. The women themselves are gripped with the thoughts of gender; their freedom of thought is obstructed. They write out of anger or diffidence, so their emotions and feelings limit their thinking to themselves only not about subjects. Aphra Behn is the first female writer to make her own money through writing. She opened the way for 19th-century novelists like Jane Austen who could write in spite of no facility to have personal space in their family rooms. Woolf thinks that in near future, minds of contemporary female writers will be freed and their brilliance will be exhibited.

5. A Stream of Consciousness technique has been used by Virginia Woolf to bring forth her argument in "A Room of One's Own." In this essay, Woolf tends to make a comparison between the affluence and benefits of men's colleges to the poor financial condition of women's colleges and claims that absence of finance and room of her own hampers women's capability to attain and create. Instead of revealing this to the readers and audiences in an uncomplicated and straightforward manner,



she exhibits it through Stream of Consciousness. We feel ourselves inside the head of the narrator as she roams through these distinct colleges. For instance, we visualize the first class food, wine and attendants at the men's college and then the mutton and harsh circumstances at the tattered women's college. Providing great details, Woolf displays us how availability of resources and freedom of money offers a kind of liberty to a person to carry on to achieve the height of creativity and intellectual life. With the help of a technique of apparent not telling, sieved through the mind of a knowledgeable, brilliant, insightful and angry woman, we observe how much more females could achieve if provided rooms of their own and this leisurely, twisting Stream of Consciousness gathering of detail is quite persuasive in this essay.

6. Whenever the narrator gets interrupted in *A Room of One's Own*, she is usually not able to retrieve her primary concentration, advocating that women in the absence of private rooms of their own, devoid of any kind of interruptions, are bound to be failure in their work due to the difficulties faced by them. While describing Oxbridge University in chapter one, the attention of the narrator is diverted to a cat without a tail. The narrator discovers this cat to be bizarre and unsuitable, and she makes use of the vision of this cat in her text in a different direction. The unusual, annoying and inappropriate vision of a cat missing a tail resulting in the narrator entirely losing her sequence of thought. It is a kind of effort in permitting the reader to feel what it one might perceive like to be a woman writer. No doubt, the narrator continues to produce a fascinating and significant point about the ambience at her luncheon; she has definitely lost track of the original point. This transition emphasizes her point that women, who usually do not possess a room of their own and also lack the time to write, fail to compete with the males who don't have to scuffle for such fundamental necessities.

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<b>Subject: Literature and Gender (Part-I) ( Option-i)</b>	
<b>Course Code: 305 (i)</b>	<b>Author: Dr. Punam Miglani</b>
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<b>Myth and Reality in The Second Sex: Simone de Beauvoir</b> <b>Ain't I a woman; Black Women and Feminism: bell hooks</b>	

## STRUCTURE

### 3.0 Learning Objectives

**Myth and Reality in the Second Sex: Simone de Beauvoir**

**Ain't I a woman; Black Women and Feminism: bell hooks**

### 3.1 Introduction

**Myth and Reality in The Second Sex**

**Ain't I a Woman; Black Women and Feminism**

**A Brief about the Author: Simone de Beauvoir**

**A Brief about the Author: bell hooks**

### 3.2 Main Body of the Text:

**Myth and Reality in The Second Sex**

**Ain't I a Woman; Black Women and Feminism**

### 3.3 Further Main Body of the Text:

**Historical Background:**

**Myth and Reality in The Second Sex**

**Ain't I a Woman; Black Women and Feminism**

### 3.3.1 Themes in the Text; Myth and Reality in The Second Sex:

**Immanence vs. Transcendence**

**Nature vs. Nurture**

**Production vs. Reproduction**

**Nature as a Symbol**

**Themes in the Text: Ain't I a Woman; Black Women and Feminism:****Sexism****Violence against Slaves****3.4 Check Your Progress****3.5 Summary****3.6 Key Words****3.7 Self-Assessment Test****3.8 Answers to Check Your Progress****3.9 Suggested Reading****3.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES****MYTH AND REALITY: SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR**

- To understand the difference between myths and reality in relation to women
- To understand why woman was considered as inferior in the eyes of male
- To understand the effects of myths on the life of woman
- To understand why is woman considered a mystery

**3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The author, Simone de Beauvoir exhibits historical description of the deprived situation of women in society through her narrative, *The Second Sex*. The narrative describes contemporary hypotheses that de Beauvoir debates, abridged her description of the place of women in history, and furnishes options for how women should be handled. The work consists of two volumes: one on “Facts and Myths” that de Beauvoir endeavours to deconstruct, and the second on “Lived Experience,” in which she unfolds her own stand on how women literally encounter sexism everyday.

In the first volume, de Beauvoir first makes an attempt to concentrate on biology, psychoanalysis, and historical materialism as simultaneously three distinct fallacious theories in order to explain the



condition of women. She describes that not even a single theory out of these theories completely elucidates every facet of the condition of women. Biology is not able to describe the methods in which society shapes people to treat one another. Psychoanalysis fails to recognize why people are navigated by definite impulses and motivations to initiate with. Historical materialism is too much focused on theories related to finance to acknowledge how sexuality along with other elements play their part in determining men's treatment of women as well. This first part permits de Beauvoir to demonstrate the kind of descriptions which she will be functioning against when she offers her own theories in the succeeding sections.

In the second section of this volume de Beauvoir explains the history of treatment with women in society. She initiates by trailing the manner in which ancient societies have already ill treated females and have considered them as subservient to men. She further describes how the arrival of personal property shoved men to execute their mistreatment towards women. de Beauvoir further admits that religion also played its part in shaping the treatment of men towards women as religion also provided them moral sanctions to restrain women.

In the fifth chapter, she takes into consideration the current periods in which issuing certain rights to women has slightly improved their condition in society. However, she culminates by indicating that conventional network repression is still persistent to this day in the domain of reproduction, sexuality, and labour.

In the final part of this volume de Beauvoir takes into account the manner in which women are portrayed in myths and appreciated in literary texts. She starts by predominantly abridging how women used to be considered as idols that depicted nature and motherhood. She observes that even in this sort of admiration women were feared and considered an object only by men. In the second chapter, she examines the work of a number of authors and philosophers who converted women into an object of mythology in different, negative ways. Now here comes the last part of this first volume, which is Chapter 3, Part three of Volume I, which is the part of our syllabus to be discussed in this unit under the heading Myths and Reality, where she concludes by appraising how these myths and literary delineation influence women in their day-to-day lives.



In her second volume, which is not part of our discussion, she reviews women's lived encounters, and outlines a woman's formative years, her various roles in society, the different manner in which different women retaliate to their condition, and how the modern woman has commenced to retrieve a specific kind of independence.

### **A BRIEF ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Simone-Ernestine-Lucie-Marie Bertrand de Beauvoir was her full name and was born in the year 1908. Originally she was nurtured as a Catholic but at the age of fourteen, Beauvoir had undergone a dilemma of faith and consequently remained an atheist for the rest of her life. Since the beginning of her life, Beauvoir exhibited herself to be very talented intellectually. It was her father who fostered this inclination by making her familiar to classic creations of literature. Being an economically weak person, he was not able to offer dowry to her at the time of her marriage which actually disturbed the family but Beauvoir expressed very little interest in getting married. Rather she at a very early stage had decided to be a writer and to study as well as teach philosophy.

Beauvoir learned Philosophy, Mathematics, Languages and Literature. In 1929, she was the youngest female to clear the extremely competitive philosophy aggregation examination at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, positioning herself second to Jean-Paul Sartre, who nonetheless was appearing in the exam for the second time.

Sartre and Beauvoir both continued to be romantic as well as intellectual companions for the remaining life. Both of them were regarded as fixtures of the Parisian intellectual arena, and the cafes of St. Germain-des-Près and Montparnasse happened to be their centres for philosophic and literary conversation. For so many years both of them occupied themselves with several political causes. Towards the end of 1940s and early 1950s their perspective was drawn towards a hard line Communism. Their substantial diaries further display their closeness.

During the years from 1931 and 1941, Beauvoir used to teach philosophy and literature in Marseilles and Rouen but in 1941 the occupying Nazi government at the time dismissed her. But after some time she was allowed to resume teaching but she was again suspended in 1943 when she was formally charged with the offence of "corrupting one of her seventeen-year-old students, Nathalie Sorokine.



Another student Bianca Bienenfeld, also laid another such sort of accusation against Beauvoir. In her chronicle she resolves never to return to teaching.

The phase of Nazi occupation had been mentioned as the starting of her moral period by Beauvoir. Her literary achievement expanded and from 1941 to 1943, she wrote *Le sang des autres* (The Blood of Others) *Tous les hommes sont mortels* (All Men Are Mortal), from 1943 to 1946, and *Les bouches inutiles* (Who Shall Die?) in 1944. This phase also observed the publication of her first philosophical essay, *Pyrrhus et Cinéas*. Afterwards, she along with Raymond Aron, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty got busy in establishing *Les Temps Modernes* to which she subscribed numerous articles. Her one of the most significant existentialist writings, *Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté* (For an Ethics of Ambiguity) got published after the war in 1947. One of her most significant and most disputed books, *The Second Sex* got published in 1949. Though in this book feminism was not discussed as a crucial topic of her writing, *The Second Sex* manifested her reputation as a feminist. Championed by numerous intellectuals, the book was also positioned on the Vatican's Index of Forbidden Books.

After the publication of this book *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir was established as a renowned intellectual. This popularity was the result of both her creative works and her association with Sartre. She was frequently perceived purely as his disciple, nevertheless and it would take many years before she was generally regarded as an important thinker in her own right.

Beauvoir travelled widely in the later years of her life. On the basis of her experiences, encountered from these travels, she wrote *L'Amérique au jour le jour* (America Day by Day) in 1948 and *La longue marche* (The Long March) in 1957. Along with this she also pursued to write philosophy and fiction, she also accomplished the task of writing a four-volume autobiography. In 1981 she wrote *La cérémonie des adieux* (Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre) to immortalize the death of Sartre in 1980. She died on April 14, 1986, and was buried in Paris, next to Sartre whom she never married.

## **3.2 MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT: MYTH AND REALITY**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The *Second Sex* book written by de Beauvoir was published in 1949, during those times when feminism was not being discussed as an important social issue. It is extensively regarded to be a determinative



text of second-surge feminism. This disposition of feminism transferred its centre of concentration from obtaining specific legal rights: such as suffrage, property rights, etc., towards examining how sexism, another aspect, also affected women covering various different fields of their lives. While this wave is usually credited to the 1960s, de Beauvoir's book possibly contributed to settle the foundations for the form of thinking that elucidated second-wave feminism. By contemplating various ways in which womanhood was important in deciding women's outcomes, covering different fields of society, de Beauvoir assisted to thrust feminist thinking in a novel direction. After her book got published, the feminists started considering various issues raised by her, as the manner in which interrelation of gender and sexuality are portrayed. de Beauvoir's work is also considered revolutionary in the sense that it violated existing theories for describing differences between genders. During the course of her text, de Beauvoir dismisses groups of thinking such as Liberalism, Marxism, or Psychoanalytic theory. She builds her own paradigm for how one should comprehend femininity in a philosophical viewpoint. In the opinion of some critics, in order to put forward this, she depends extremely on the existentialist philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre. de Beauvoir utilizes this philosophy in a novel manner in order to contemplate how gender forms the respective capabilities of people to realize motive in their lives. In this way, she pursues to be innovative despite the fact of extracting idea of someone else.

Simultaneously, de Beauvoir's text was also significant in the sense that it sketched a kind of parallels to other movements concerned with social justice running at that time. For instance, she lays the condition of all women to the particular conditions of African-Americans, Jews, the Colonized, and the Proletariat. This kind of juxtaposition between different maltreated groups assisted to support some of her thinking and provided her ideas, a considerable strength. No doubt, her text was significant for second-wave feminism but today feminist theory has come a long way since then.

### **3.3 FURTHER MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT: MYTH AND REALITY IN THE SECOND SEX**

In the chapter three of part three and volume one; Facts and Myths of the book *The Second Sex* under the title *Myths and Realities* de Beauvoir review how the myths influence daily life.

In literature, the myth of the woman is important. In order to respond to this question, we must explain how this myth relates to reality. Myths come in a variety of forms. Positioning the Woman is to suggest



the ultimate Other, devoid of reciprocity, rejecting, contrary to experience that she might be a peer or a subject. The myths created around women attempt to summarize them as a whole, despite the fact that women manifest themselves in many various ways in actual life. As a result, there are numerous conflicting myths, which males find confusing. For instance, a patriarchal culture that priorities preserving patrimony, always requires the existence of both men and women. It is simple to perceive the ambiguity of characters like Apasia and Mme de Pompadour as a physical experience. The Muse, the Goddess Mother, and Beatrice can all be found in a woman, however, if she is positioned as the Praying Mantis, the Mandrake, or the Demon.

Ambivalence will seem to be a natural characteristic of the Eternal Feminine because group representation and social types are typically described by pairs of opposing concepts. The discovery of the sensual features of feminine flesh is not a legendary experience, and articulating these features through analogies to pebbles or flowers does not transform them into legend. However, it is to claim that a woman is made of flesh, that flesh is represented by night and death.

Undoubtedly, in certain ways, women are enigmatic, "mysterious like everyone," in Maeterlinck's words. They are doomed to ignorance on the nature of women's sexual pleasure, the discomforts of menstruation, and the sorrows of delivery since they are unable to understand her singular experience through any kind of sympathy. The truth is that mystery is reciprocal; every man's heart also contains a presence that is closed to itself and impenetrable to women. Because woman is a mystery for man, she is also viewed as a mystery in and of herself. It's true that her circumstances make her particularly suited to being depicted in this way; the connection between each person's physiological and emotional lives; in other words, the most perplexing aspect of the human situation is the relationship between an individual's factuality and the freedom that flows from it. For women, this mystery is presented in the most unsettling form.

However, neither the secret of organic existence nor the subjective seclusion of awareness is what is meant by the term mystery. To say that a woman is mysterious does not mean that she is mute but rather that her language is not understood. You can debate whether a peasant woman is a good or horrible labourer, or if an actress has skill or not, but if you look at a woman in the context of her imminent presence, there is nothing that can be said; she is ineligible. Now she is embraced in her immanence in romantic or marital relationships as well as in all relationships where she serves as the



vassal or the other. It is remarkable that the female friend, coworker, or associate lacks mystery; yet, if the vassal is male and a young man, for example, appears before an older and richer man or woman as the inessential object, he too is shrouded in mystery. He frequently keeps the woman, or at the absolute least, assists her. However, whereas a woman typically finds many benefits in doing business with a man, a man can only benefit from doing business with a woman if he loves her. Since a woman hardly has the ability to hear her own heart, it is possible to estimate the degree of his attachment to her by observing his overall demeanour; Woman is kept on the periphery of the world; she cannot be objectively defined through this world, and her mystery hides emptiness and nothingness.

Like any oppressed people, women also purposefully distort their perception of the world; beginning in childhood, women are taught to deceive men in order to outwit and avoid them. She plays it safe, is hypocritical, and prudent. But a deeper truth is the feminine Mystery as understood by legendary thought. The notion of the woman is a luxury, just as woman does not necessarily understand man; there is no male mystery. The demands of their jobs and their poverty prevent the peasant of ancient Egypt, the Bedouin peasant, the mediaeval artisan, and the worker of today from embellishing the relationship they have with the specific lady who is their companion with an auspicious or fatal aura. Through religions, customs, language, stories, music, and films even the lives of those who are most cruelly affected by tangible realities are penetrated by myths. Everyone can use myth to elevate their own humble experiences. For example, one man who has been betrayed by the woman he loves, calls her a slut; another who is obsessed with his own masculinity discovers that his partner is a praying mantis; and The Myth of Woman replaces an authentic relationship with an autonomous being with the immobile contemplation of a mirage. If man ceased using woman as a symbol, he would gain nothing, quite the contrary. Rejecting myths and seeing a human being in a woman does not devalue a man's experience since that experience would not lose any of its diversity, richness, or intensity if it were taken on in its inter-subjectivity.

It is not to eliminate all dramatic relationships between the sexes, and it is not to dismiss the meanings that feminine reality truly reveals to man. Women today experience a painful separation due to men's dishonest behaviour; they generally accept that women should be peers and equals. It can be unsettling to perceive women as both social creatures and sexual prey. There is a young fiance abandoning his fiancée in a recent Peynet painting series because he was tempted by the attractive mayoress who was



about to celebrate the wedding; the idea that a woman may hold a "man's office" and still be desirable has long been the target of more or less crude jokes.

### **3.3.1 THEMES IN THE NOVEL**

#### **IMMANENCE VS. TRANSCENDENCE**

De Beauvoir uses the term immanence to characterize the historical domain that has been given to women: a segregated space where women are inward-looking, passive, and engrossed in their own thoughts. The term transcendence describes the contrasting males, who are powerful, energetic, creative, and reach outward into the outside universe. Although immanence and transcendence should coexist in every human life, man has historically denied women the transcendent position. De Beauvoir demonstrates how women are compelled to give up their existential right to transcendence and accept a limited, monotonous confinement in her stage-by-stage analysis of the situation of women. They have no other means of escape besides man, and even this is hopeless. Man has tasks, pursuits, and successes; woman only has man.

#### **NATURE VS. NURTURE**

De Beauvoir contends that disparities in how men and women were raised led to women's social inferiority rather than inherent distinctions between the sexes. Male dominance is conditioned at every stage of development rather than being innate or predetermined. According to De Beauvoir, "Man learns his power." In the same way, women are not immanent, mediocre, or passive when they are born. Instead, she is socialized to believe that decent women must exhibit these qualities, and subtly or not, she is taught that hiding who she really is is the only way to find happiness and be accepted. Boys and girls need to get education in different ways from an early age in order to make significant changes in society. Given that they were all born equally, it is possible for them to be equal in adulthood and in childhood; but, society must adjust its biased attitudes in order for this to happen.

#### **PRODUCTION VS. REPRODUCTION**

De Beauvoir argues that one of the main issues facing women is the challenge of balancing their reproductive and productive capacities. Women are valued and despised for their ability to reproduce. Her capacity for production includes her capacity to engage in work or make other economic



contributions to her society. De Beauvoir discovers that production and reproduction are not incompatible upon closer examination. A woman's ability to bear children shouldn't prevent her from holding a job outside the home. Women are neither solely wombs nor solely workers.

Women have been held as slaves to their reproductive abilities throughout history. Her contributions to society have been limited to her womb throughout the course of her life, which has been an unbroken string of pregnancies. Due to the fact that women still have to balance the responsibilities of birthing and raising children alone, which is hard for even the most ardent moms, technology has failed to fully integrate women into the workforce. The nuclear family must be reorganized such that she is allowed to leave the home in order for women to achieve more than just liberation and join the workforce on an equal footing with men. To enable women to take ownership of their own pregnancies and govern their own lives, social stigmas against unwed motherhood and abortion must be removed despite the fact that it's crucial for women. Though the ability to labour is necessary, a woman's integration into the "totality of human reality" is even more crucial if she is to be a true partner to a man.

## NATURE AS A SYMBOL

In the view of de Beauvoir, nature depicts itself as a symbol for men's perspective towards women. Nature is usually identified with women during the course of the text; women are portrayed as a natural strength in myths, or they are linked with nature through their appearance and their performance in society. de Beauvoir considers nature as a power that men both admire and fright. It is the foundation of life, but is also uncertain and periodically fatal. Similarly, men reach women with hesitancy since they survive outside of social life and subscribe to reproduction in a significant manner, but can hamper man's progression in civilization.

## 3.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Describe some myths about women that Simone de Beauvoir refers to in *The Second Sex*.
2. How and why is it challenging for women to adopt the modern role?

## 3.5 SUMMARY



In the Chapter Three of part three and volume one; Facts and Myths of the book, *The Second Sex* under the title *Myths and Realities* de Beauvoir reviews how the myths influence daily life. She explains the differentiation between steady myths, which presume that a specific idea is specified and promotes it onto different circumstances, and solid reality. In reality, women cannot be enclosed by a sole idea. This usually steers to a kind of aggravation and frustration for men who attempt to comprehend and recognize them. Since myths make an effort to abridge women in totality, under a solitary notion, it becomes entirely difficult for men to acknowledge it when women tend to shatter this mould in reality. Specifically, the relation between nature and women permits men to describe much of her agony and suffering as something natural and infeasible to change. Further more, the myth of feminine “mystery” in a way permits men to imagine that women are impossible to recognize and understand, rather than to stimulating him to come to terms with what he fails to understand. Actually de Beauvoir tends to point out that all people actually happen to be mysterious to one another.

de Beauvoir further describes that in reality women have learned the skill of being mysterious so as to shield themselves. Since men persecute them, they have learnt to be deceiving and concealing their actual emotions and feelings. de Beauvoir appreciates authors who tend to write about women without ambiguity and mystery which according to her does not make her creation less enthralling. She in general, tries to put forward the argument that getting free of these myths connected to women would not carry away from men’s experiences, but instead would like to justify these experiences in truth. Presently, men hold the belief that “real or this women ” are actually those who admit their role as the Other but for de Beauvoir this is in reality contrary to the truth. She commemorates a new inclination in which women who inhabit professional status are criticized. Probably, this indicates that new myths, more conducive to women’s liberation, will come about.

### 3.6 KEY WORDS

- **Alleviating**-reduce
- **Ambiguity**-vagueness
- **Ambivalence**-uncertainty
- **Archetypes**-a very typical example of a certain person or thing



- **Authentically**-genuinely
- **Autonomous** -having the freedom to govern itself or control its own affairs
- **Conceptualised**-conceived
- **Immutable**- rigid
- **Insinuate**-imply
- **Opulent**- luxurious
- **Patrimony**-property inherited from one's father or male ancestor
- **Sublimating**-redirecting
- **Transcendence**-superiority
- **Unleashed**-release

### 3.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

1. Why and how do women try to shield themselves?
2. Why are women considered 'other' by males? Discuss.
3. Why is the woman described as 'Mystery' in the chapter?
4. How do myths affect the whole life of a woman?
5. Explain the use of Nature as a symbol.

### 3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Beauvoir explores in her book the reasons why men are given preferential treatment over women. She finds plenty of evidence that women have been considered as inferior but no rational justifications for why this should be the case when she examines this subject through the lenses of history, biology, and psychology. She comes to the conclusion that false narratives or myths have been created to support the treatment of women as inferior and in characterizing them as mutilated or imperfect men. The "eternal feminine" or the myth of maternity are examples of myths that dehumanize



women by defining them solely by their ability to reproduce and strip them of their uniqueness in favour of representing them as the impersonal symbol of "life." Menstruation being a menace that is greatly overstated is another misconception. Additionally, Beauvoir addresses the virginity myth. She explains that men insist on having virginal women come to them because they have a mythical desire to own them. According to the myth of beauty, a woman must be young and healthy forever so that a man can deny his own mortality. Older women, even older virgins, are considered repulsive since they serve as a reminder that the male will also pass away. Not herself but what reflects back to the man what he wants to see, the woman is the "Other," not herself. On the other hand, what he dislikes about the woman is, mythically she is considered inflated and rendered repulsive. The true woman is obscured by all of this.

2. There is no doubt that it is extremely challenging for women in the modern world to assume both their status as autonomous individuals and their feminine destiny. This is the root of the uneasiness and discomfort that occasionally causes others to refer to them as "a lost sex." Furthermore, it is undeniably more comfortable to be held in blind enslavement than to work for one's freedom; similarly, the dead are better adapted to the ground than the living. In any event, going back is not advisable nor within' one's power. The situation that is being created must be assumed by males without hesitation in order for women to experience it without being torn between their new role at professional front and at the same time her feminine roles assigned to her for being a woman. It is further added that women who occupy certain positions at professional front are also criticized which may lead to coming up of new myths conducive to her liberation.

### 3.9 SUGGESTED READING

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### **3.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

## **AIN'T I A WOMAN: BLACK WOMEN AND FEMINISM: BELL HOOKS**

1. To investigate the complexities of living in the United States as a Black woman
2. To examine the convergence of racism and sexism in major political and social movements throughout American history
3. To comprehend the status of black women even after abolition of slavery
4. To learn the extent of discrimination between the same sex that is Black and White women
5. To explore the exploitation of Black women in every sphere

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The year 1981 argued in favour of black women seeing feminism as an ideology and fighting for their full insertion at all points of the feminist movement. The author, bell hooks (preferred to have her first and last name written with all lowercase letters, to focus on her message rather than herself) describes that in the era of slavery, being both female and black, black slaves had to bear the impact of the scorn of women. Since sexual detestation is deeply ingrained in American culture, women have become an origin of male desire and moral threats. The imperatives of racial imperialism prompted the emergence of a "real feminist cultural cult" which continued in 20th century that idealized white women as a spiritual supplement for men. The black woman becomes the antithesis of the ideal femininity because she is a kind of ultimatum to racist and carnal imperialism. As a result, black women are available to all forms of sexual, psychological and physical ill treatment without any means of protecting them from white or black society.

She also tackles typecasts about black women that stem from an amalgamation of sexism and racism. These stereotypes, which essentially turn survival into the devil, are rooted in the slavery and racism of the Jim Crow era. They are internalized in the collective psyche of American society. These stereotypes are so abrasive that they have led to innumerable attacks against black women. She asserts that Black



Nationalism seeks to replicate racist patriarchy with black men at the peak of the social hierarchy. The organization of black rights movements still operates on a patriarchal model that leaves black women marginalized. The author deliberately debates how the feminist movement has been attacked by upper-class white women, strengthening the stigma against the movement and the cultural divisions within it. She advised black women that it was in their best interest not to give up on a feminist movement or label. In contrast, racism within the movement must be publicly criticized and challenged by devoted black feminists.

*Ain't I a woman: Black Women and Feminism* is a 1982 book by bell hooks titled after a speech by Sojourner Truth, *Ain't I a Woman*. The writer is a feminist theorist, a cultural critic as well as a writer. Her work is a groundbreaking story in the history of the feminist movement, its impact on women, how black women have been affected by racism and sexism era in the 17th century. In her book, hooks distinguishes between black feminism and white feminism and explains the fact that black women are at the bottom of the scale, therefore movements dedicated to change within the arrangement cannot be successful. The book also talks about the problems that exist between imperialist, patriarchal and capitalist systems. Hooks analyses the past slavery position of black women in America and how they have faced dual oppression as well as the deep racism and sexism in society and how it got them ranked lower in status.

It is clear that the study of people of colour, especially black women, was discouraged, or otherwise neglected by theorists, scholars, intellectuals, and academics in the field until hooks published her treatise. Feminist groups were very much concerned with issues and oppression of patriarchy and class. It was Sojourner Truth's famous speech, which revealed that black women, besides the oppression of patriarchy and class were oppressed by racism. This is why hooks decided to title the book with a Truth's question that says *Ain't I a Woman*. The book clearly defined the social status of black American women. bell hooks points out that black women were decentralized as well as devalued by black and white men and then by white women. The book comprises five chapters. In the first chapter, Hooks sheds light on the days of slavery and recounts the experiences of black women up to modern times. She gives the book exceptional insight, analyzing the continued degradation of black women in society. Throughout the chapters, one can visualize that hooks is seeking to provide a comprehension of ill-treated and dishonoured black women's struggles in feminist movements.



## A BRIEF ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bell Hooks, née Gloria Watkins, has been known as an intellectual and a scholar, who is completely dedicated to analytical awareness and consciousness of one 's own self and society. She was born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky on September 25, 1952. Since her childhood she has exhibited herself to be critically conscious. She followed B.A. in 1973 from Stanford University and afterwards carried on with an M.A. in 1976 from the University of Wisconsin and a PhD in 1983 from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

bell hooks was brought up in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. She reported her town as a "world where folks were content to get by on a little, where Baba, mama's mother, made soap, dug fishing worms, set traps for rabbits, made butter and wine, sewed quilts, and wrung the necks of chickens."

Her father was the custodian of the local post office and her mother was a homemaker. Her childhood was plagued by her dysfunction. Her father in particular, embodied the intense oppression which she later associated with her patriarchy. Initially, she needed an escape from her turbulent personal life and turned to her poetry and writing practice.

She adopted a pseudonym from her maternal great-grandmother in order to honour her female ancestry and chose to use lowercase letters in order to abscond the ego that comes with names. She has commented on a wide range of topics for her, from her pop culture and writing to her self-esteem and education.

Hook attended a racist public school. Her love for her written language later motivated her to speak out about the relieving power of critical thinking. In her early years, Fuchs combined her love of reading with public speaking, often reciting poetry and scriptures in congregations.

Bell Fuchs' upbringing in the South inculcated a fright of either doing or saying something wrong. These early fears left her almost unable to pursue her love of writing. She received little assistance from her family, who thought women were more suitable for traditional roles. The segregated social atmosphere in the South at the time strengthened their dismay.

hooks started writing her first book, *Ain't I a Woman; Black Women and Feminism* while attending Stanford University. After she received her bachelor's degree in 1973, she enrolled in graduate school at



the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she obtained her master's degree in English. She attended her doctoral program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Over the next few years, she worked on a paper on writer Toni Morrison. At the same time, she completed the manuscript of *Ain't I a Woman* and published her poetry collection. While searching for a publisher, she started teaching and lecturing at various colleges along the West Coast. In 1981 she was able to find a publisher for her own book and after two years secured her doctorate. hooks, like others before her, discovered that the mainstream feminist movement was primarily concentrated on middle and upper class college educated women with little or no concern for the issues of women of colour. She pointed out that it concentrated on the predicament of a group of white women. She has long been concerned about the lack of women of color at women's colleges. *Ain't I a Woman* reflects the beginning of her attempt to bring forward the cultural anxieties of African-American women into the mainstream feminist movement.

Hooks has always been in favour of unity between genders, between races, between classes. She thinks that anti-male sentiment is restoring the doctrine that feminism seeks to transform. For women to be emancipated, she explains, men must also expose, confront, combat and play a role in the scuffle to transform sexism.

Although she is usually charged with being confrontational, Hooks never faltered in her faith that change is a smarting and confusing process. She consistently keeps on believing in the trans-formative ability of the language. She is an expert at converting individual pain into shared energy. Hooks went on to create various books and other works. She still accepts that evaluative examination is essential to gain autonomy and overthrow the dominant system. In 2004, hooks initiated teaching as an eminent resident Professor at Berea College. She resumed to be a provoking feminist theorist and gave lectures. She died in the year 2021.

## **3.2 MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT: AIN'T I A WOMAN: BLACK WOMEN AND FEMINISM**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Always intense and anxious to call on individuals to acknowledge and change the pessimistic consequences, hooks still could take out time to follow formal academic research in English, writing her



thesis on the work of Toni Morrison. This fondness of English and the language blended with her vexation at white capitalist patriarchy guided her to start writing her first book, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, when she was 19. The publication of the book took eight years of research and repeated revisions. There, she began to investigate questions that would later become a continuum throughout her writings. Hooks called for an end to the humiliation and swindling of black women, proclaiming it was an essential move to undermining white supremacy. Hooks' primary apprehension is with black women, however, her examination of the current place of black women in the social hierarchy certainly addresses the issue of race and class as well as gender.

### **3.3 FURTHER MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT**

Gloria Jean Watkins is a social activist and one of the first authors to document the experiences of black women in slavery and political emancipation in America. She writes under the pseudonym bell hooks, a name she borrowed from her maternal grandmother to honour her feminine heritage and draw attention to her message instead of towards herself.

In her book, *'Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* explores the lives of black women in America from the 19th to the 20th century. We have an encounter with a personality who emerges as physically and sexually exploited worn out slaves, then evolves into sexually abused, overworked, dedicated mothers, and eventually more and more often sexually abused who ultimately becomes an overworked puppet of capitalism that continues to suffer.

Hooks highlights the awkwardness that not only accompanies the fledgling stages of feminist ideology, but also plagues two centuries of struggle. Almost until it ran out of power (and more often, even to this day), it was only admitted as a white women's movement. Unluckily for black women, impelling participation in the feminist movement usually meant compromising the forthrightness of the black rights movement, and vice versa. Taking the side of white women meant advocating their racism while promoting black men, further empowered patriarchal social order. The term "black" referred to black men and "women" referred to white women, black women existed neither on paper nor in speech.

bell hooks' book explains that slavery is often shockingly portrayed as the weakening of black men. This notion obscures the aggressiveness of the oppression of black women. bell hooks clearly defines that it was not sexual desire that caused the gang rape of black girls/women by white men,



instead the urgency to achieve complete adherence to the white royal order. In orthodox Christian doctrine, women were depicted as heinous sexual temptresses who bring immorality into the world. The later socialization of white men approved them to rationalize the rape of female slaves, whether they were 14 or 41 years old. Since every black woman was contemplated to have a loose sexual moral, it was not only reasonable to sexually abuse her, but also justified. A sociological study of low-income black relationships found that most boys refer to black women as "that bitch" or "that whore," says hooks. The representation of women in today's media stems from the historical identification of women as sex tempters. This is most likely also the reason why actresses often dress revealingly and why women's lives on television are all centered around men and why pornography progressively presents a male mindset.

Americans drove them away from the harsh religious enlightenment that shaped the lives of the early colonists. The cost women must pay to climb this podium is to absolutely renounce all sexual desires lest their "true motives" be revealed. This describes why we are generally forced to respond to romantic overture without making our own. If we are too frank, we are too wretched. While white women are relatively authorized to take on these noble roles, black women are densely stereotyped by the media as heavy women with deformed features or the image of a patient, self-sacrificing mother.

This description has been used to romanticize the arduous lives of black women, just as our mothers are usually admired for their childcare, cooking, household chores and other duties, a full-time job. It's not charming or a constant motif in the book is the theory of the survival of black matriarchy. Male social analysts had to defend 'the independent and decisive role of black women played within the black family structure. It is an icebreaker used at gatherings of the middle and upper classes. Black women wonder if they need a feminist movement subsequently.

The edition was published in 1981 and deals with the late 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, but the topics in the book are very pertinent even today. Hooks explains that it's not feminism that forces women to work, but capitalism that requires women to endeavour by the side of men to reimburse the bills. She accused the capitalist patriarchy of tricking men into operating dehumanizing tasks on women. They built up a lost sense of power by committing brutality against women. She ends on a relatively optimistic note by saying that women with the power to see beyond rape and carnage must persevere to 'no longer victimized, no longer unrecognized, no longer afraid' so that others can take the



courage and follow suit. The book's ceremonial speech by Sojourner Truth inquires why black women aren't given respectful treatment. She protested the sale of her thirteen children, she pleaded against brutal treatment at the Women's Rights Conference at Old Stone Church, Ohio in 1851, and she asks, "Ain't I a woman?"

## **CRITICAL REVIEW**

When reading through the book, one of the things that impress the reader is the manner the writer makes clear the enormous role white men play in arousing racism in feminism. Additionally, she disputes that the black potential group was sexist while the feminist movement was prejudiced, so black women have difficulty in deciding between the two. Hooks asserted that the feminist movement was a middle- and upper-class project that did not address the necessity of poor and black women, thereby leading to racism, sexism, and classism.

The author suggests that this is why the participation of black women in the feminist movement in the 1970s was so low. She explains the matriarchal myth that women are invariably responsible for any difficult situations that arise in black families. Women are still called matriarchs but society gives them very limited power. Society blamed black women, but they had no power. The author portrays in detail how black women are brutally abused by whites. The author suggests that this is why the participation of black women in the feminist movement in the 1970s was so low. To further display the abuse of black women, hooks writes that the word man refers to white men while the word woman refers to white women, again, black or black only used to refer to men. Black women are completely disregarded. Black women were raped all along the movement and it continues to this day. Women were also enslaved and discriminated because they were looked down upon and abandoned. One thing that is exceptional about this book, nonetheless, is the amount to which the author exposes the hardships that black women endured under white control. She does it in detail beyond fright or concealing anything. Overall, she doesn't support any group and also attacks black women, which helps her audience understand the role each group plays in the feminist movement.

The book aids readers to avoid the pitfalls of racism in the future and challenges their belief about racism. One feature that is depicted is how the writer conveys her story. Sometimes it initiates the reader to realize that she wrote for herself or that she wrote according to her feelings. Many readers



believe that she must have penned out of emotion as she spoke in her own voice with anger as she wrote the book. In addition, there are many rhetorical questions and it can be difficult to isolate fact from emotion. When reading the book, the reader has the feeling that the book was written in rage. The African-American author herself raises a lot of questions about her work, and it seems like she often takes her anger out on white people. Another flaw of the book is that hooks makes generalizations that may not be binding on all stakeholders. Some generalizations comprise the view that all white feminists are racist.

The book is completely about the lives of white women or the bygone times of black women in the United States, the clash between race and gender-specific, and the oppression of black women. I think the title is anyway ambiguous because it doesn't give the reader a hint as to what to anticipate in the book. The composer could have utilized a different title, for instance; *The Lives of Black Women in America*. By using such a title, anyone reading the book will always have an idea of what the book is about and can increase their sales.

Hooks describe the history and oppression that black women suffered at the hands of whites. This oppression in the mode of sexism and racism targets black women in America. It addresses the issue of racism in the feminist movement and its central debate is that the battle to end sexism and racism are characteristically linked. The author analyses the ways in which black women are defiled and how feminism has futilely addressed the lives of these women. However, the author argues that feminism can be utilized as a device by black women if they all work together and build a movement that works for them.

## **DISCUSSION ON THE TEXT**

In *Ain't I a Woman* by bell hooks delves into the history of oppression and prejudice faced by women of colour in our society. By comprehending how deeply oppressed black women were, hooks offers strategies for overcoming this oppression in the future. She displays to us how racism is immortalized by men and women fighting for their own rights but ignoring the particular requirement of people of colour. She highlights how white women won the right to vote at the expense of not only black men but black women, and how the women's rights movement had more negative than positive effects on black women. Through her book *Ain't I a Woman*, bell hooks provides us with important acumen into



what can be done by all parties including women of colour to conceive a comprehensive society that celebrates diversification and achieves equality for all its members.

The agony that black women tolerated during slavery was compounded by the affliction of sexism. White American men had certain attitudes against women that made them appear pure and innocent. But unfortunately, this feature does not consist of black women; rather, they were depicted as "sexual heathens" who were said to be promiscuous. White colonists utilized this deceitful and prejudicial stereotype to defend the rape and sexual profiteering of enslaved African women. The peril of sexual invasion was used to frighten them. Linda Brent wrote about how her white master harassed and abused her with these threats throughout her teens. Women who resisted advances from their masters or overseers were harshly punished in order to maintain control. Ann was sentenced to prison and floggings for throwing a bottle at one such harasser. To make matters worse, dehumanizing stereotypes such as these were never fully abolished after slavery was abolished making it difficult for black women to escape oppression even today

Black men and women have long been at odds as a result of the patriarchal system in place in the United States. This is because Black men and women were subjected to the same belief that men should be the breadwinners and head of the household as white men and women. In an effort to combat this imposed social order, prominent black figures were advocating for distinct gender roles as early as 1852. Black men felt they needed to take on a breadwinner role and free their partners from domestic jobs as a result of pressure from Black communities and racism from white employers who refused to hire Black men in wage-earning positions. Some Black men turned to violence to control women because they lacked power or status in the racial hierarchy. Malcolm X, for example, used his position as a pimp to exploit women in order to reclaim his masculinity.

The American feminist movement must shed its racism if it is to challenge and dismantle the white patriarchal social order and make real and lasting progress. The early examples of rhetoric used in the Women's Rights Movement demonstrate that white women advanced their own cause by employing racist and exclusionary strategies. A southern suffragist argued that women's rights were necessary for "immediate and durable white supremacy" at the National American Woman Suffrage Convention in 1903. This demonstrates that the feminist movement was still focused on preserving racial superiority rather than empowering all women of any race. Because of this kind of racism, black women have been



actively omitted from the narrative of feminism. This demonstrates that white feminists still need to abandon their initial foundations if progress is to be made. The modern struggle for female liberation includes more than just gaining the same rights and authority as men; it is likewise about perceiving how White man controlled society involves bigotry as a device to make strain between various gatherings of ladies to keep up with its power structure. This indicates that in order for the female revolution to be successful, Black and White women must unite as allies and dispel any racial stereotypes or myths that pit one group against another. If the American feminist movement truly wishes to end white male supremacy once and for all, they must recognize this.

The evident reality is that racism in society frequently obstructed Black women's efforts in the Women's Rights Movement. Black women were forced to compromise their ability to promote equality in the face of racial injustice despite their desire to benefit from suffrage, which was a cornerstone of the movement. However, election officials who supported segregation made it difficult and even dangerous for them to vote. Anna Cooper, a prominent champion for Black women's rights in the nineteenth century, had dreams of acquiring higher education and having the options to pursue possibilities outside of marriage due to suffrage measures, however, those fantasies never worked out. Even after the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote in 1920, most southern states used poll taxes, intimidation, and threats of violence to prevent Black people from voting. White women used their votes in these circumstances to support politics that supported violence against Black people. Black people were also subjected to more oppressive policies during this time of reconstruction, making it difficult for them to exercise their newly acquired civil rights or receive equal protection under labour rights, employment opportunities, and voter registration laws.

The fact that Black women have been required to play a much more subordinate role in the struggle for Black liberation and rights is hard to ignore. Magazines like McCall's and Ladies Home Journal encouraged women to conform to patriarchal gender roles by selling them cosmetics and fashionable clothing while expecting them to exhibit subservience. Many people still don't feel empowered enough to lead the movement in its current form, so these ideas still have an impact today. As a result, it should come as no surprise that traditional beliefs about gender roles continue to hold back not only Black women but also any other group of people who may want full autonomy in their fight for equality. This causes individuals in each equality movement to struggle as a result of a lack of representation and



support for what ought to be basic human rights that are available to all people regardless of their gender or race.

### **3.3.1 THEMES IN THE TEXT**

#### **SEXISM**

Bell hooks demonstrates how American discrimination against women began with slavery. The denial of the right to vote, to work and earn a living, and to a fair trial in court is all examples of discrimination. Because they were regarded as the weaker sex, women faced more challenges during the slavery era. However, black slave women were particularly affected by this discrimination because they were also subjected to racial discrimination. The story of how women were denied the right to vote during a time when men could vote and serve in government is told in the book. Although they granted the male slave the right to vote, lawmakers deemed it prudent to deny all women the right to vote, including white women whose social status was higher than that of the male slave. Additionally, women were denied the right to work for a wage. According to the courts, women cannot work and earn a living. Black women were required to work for very little money in order to meet their basic needs. White women, on the other hand were housewives and caregivers. Individuals of colour were likewise threatened by people for they had no regulations to secure and guard their poise. Both white men and black male slaves routinely raped black women. The storyteller recaps an account of a young lady named Ana who battled against a white man who endeavoured to assault her. Ironically, the predatory man was released while she was punished for using self-defense. This argument was supported by the court's assertion that the defendant was black and female. In addition, women never held the position of overseer, despite the fact that they worked harder than men on the plantations for black women and men. The black male slave held this position, which was the highest one a slave could hold. The female slaves were never compensated for the quality work that they did yet were fairly rebuffed cruelly for poor work.

#### **VIOLENCE AGAINST SLAVES**

Bell hooks recalls dreadful stories of the brutal treatment given to slaves both on board slave ships and also those who worked in the plantations or at the homes of their proprietors. These accounts were shared by observers or those who had been harmed by slavery. The narrator describes how slave owners



frequently raped black women, who were thought to be defenseless and weak. Additionally, they were severely beaten for minor misunderstandings. This was done by the masters of the slaves in an effort to "break them in" and make them docile and unresponsive to their treatment. Slaves who didn't complete a task were whipped on the plantations where they were brought to work. Simon Bradley, who was a slave at the time, talks about a time when a woman was badly beaten and then burned with candle wax because she burned the tips of the waffles while cooking. Slaves were subjected to this violence by their masters in order to maintain control over them.

### 3.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Why does the author spell her name with lowercase letters?
2. According to bell hooks, how was the representation of black women in American culture influenced by slavery?
3. "Ain't I a Woman"? Why is the quote from Sojourner Truth's speech in Akron, Ohio, in 1851 so significant to bell hooks' intellectual and political work? Explain Hooks' insistence on focusing on all forms of discrimination in the pursuit of universal equality.
4. Explain in brief the issues raised by bell hooks in the text.
5. Do you agree that after abolition, black women continue to struggle and are systematically devalued in society? Discuss.

### 3.5 SUMMARY

*Ain't I a Woman* is a significant and prompt book by well-known feminist scholar bell hooks. In it, she inspects the prolonged and pervasive consequences of racism and sexism on black women in America. This book proceeds beyond just investigating the history of how these affairs have intersected, but delves into real-life discussions that demonstrate the complex intersectionality of race and gender. It's a sort of eye-opening glance at what it indicates to be both Black and female in the United States.

1981 contends for people of colour to embrace women's rights as a philosophy, and battle for their full consideration in all levels of the women's activist development. bell hooks explains that black female slaves bore the brunt of misogyny during slavery because they were both black and female. The female



became the object of lust and a threat to male morale because of the cultural aversion to sexuality that was ingrained in American society. The objectives of racial government impelled the development of a social “real feminist cultural cult” (which continued into the 20th century) that glorified the white lady as the Spiritual companion for men. The black woman turns out to be the antithesis to the perfect women hood because she is a kind of a danger to racial and sexual colonialism. Consequently, black women are powerless against a wide range of sexual, mental, and actual maltreatment without any mode of safeguard from white or black society.

The sexist and racist stereotypes of black women that are perpetuated by hooks are another topic of discussion. These stereotypes, which essentially demonize survival, date back to Jim Crow. They are internalized in the collective psyche of American society. They are ingrained in American society's collective psyche. These generalizations are destructive to the point that they have prompted innumerable assaults against black women. She contends that dark patriotism looks to reproduce bigoted male centric society with people of colour at the highest point of the social order. The institution of black rights motion still works on a patriarchal replica that leaves black women marginalized. Hooks goes into great detail about white upper-class, women have taken over the feminist movement, making it more stigmatized and nurturing cultural divisions within it. She prompts black women that it is to their greatest advantage not to forsake the women's activist development or name. Instead, dedicated black feminists need to openly criticize and fight racism in the movement.

### 3.6 KEY WORDS

- **Abolitionist-** a person who favours the abolition of a practice or institution especially capital punishment or (formerly) slavery
- **Accustomed-** habitual
- **Amalgamate-** combine
- **Astounded-** amazed
- **Brutal-** cruel
- **Conscientious-** industrious



- **Contemptuously-** in a scornful way showing disdain
- **Contemptuous-** scornful
- **Contradiction-** a combination of statements, ideas, or features which are opposed to one another
- **Dehumanization-** the process of depriving a person or group of positive human qualities
- **Delineated-** describe
- **Denouncement-** condemnation
- **Devaluation-** the reduction or underestimation of the worth or importance of something
- **Discrimination-** prejudice
- **Emasculated-** deprived of his male role or identity, weaken
- **Emulated-** reproduce
- **Endorsement-** approval
- **Engendered-** produce
- **Fidelity-** loyalty
- **Indentured-** kind of bonded labour
- **Infernal-** hell
- **Lynchings-** executed
- **Manumitted-** release from slavery
- **Matriarch-** a woman who is the head of a family or tribe
- **Momentum-** the quantity of motion of a moving body, measured as a product of its mass and velocity
- **Perpetuates-** preserve
- **Persecution-** oppression



- **Predominance-** prevalence
- **Preferential-**privileged
- **Quadroon-** a person of one quarter Black ancestry
- **Recalcitrant-**uncooperative
- **Retaliation-** revenge
- **Semblance-** appearance
- **Subjugation-** the action of bringing someone or something under domination or control
- **Substantial-** considerable
- **Transcended-** be or go beyond the range or limits of (a field of activity or conceptual sphere)
- **Transformation-** change

### 3.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

1. What motivated bell hooks to write the text Ain't I a Woman?
2. How does bell hooks portray feminism in her text?
3. In what different light, black and white women have been depicted in the text?
4. Explain the subject of sexism as depicted in the text from the point of view of the writer?
5. Write in brief about the life of author bell hooks.
6. Explain with reference to the text about the attitude of the society towards the rape of black women.
7. Explain in brief the terms matriarch and patriarch as exhibited in the book.
8. Write about the attitude of white men towards black women with reference to the text.
9. Why does the author suggest to both white and black women to unite?
10. How do white men justify sexual assault on black women?



### 3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. bell hooks, a renowned author of her time, is the author of this text and deliberately chooses to spell her name with lowercase letters. Her actual name is Gloria Watkins, but she decides to utilize the name bell hooks in honour of her great-grandmother, who was called Bell Blair Hooks. She decided to choose to make the name lowercase as she didn't want to draw attention to her identity and also to vanish the ego that comes with the name but she wanted people to concentrate on her ideas and themes.

2. bell hooks argues that women were considered subservient in slavery because they were black and women. As a result, they were subjected to physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. Consequently, they got no protection from white society or black men. Black women were compared to the idealized image of the white woman as pure and saintly because they were assumed to be associated with lust and sexuality at the time. Thus, Black people were introduced as being ruined and consequently were inconceivably helpless. She contends that these destructive generalizations and names kept on influencing people of colour long after bondage finished, and has had a massively harming social effect.

3. It is representative of Sojourner Truth's ideas regarding the significance of inter-sectionality; the quote from her speech is significant to bell hooks. It brought to light how at the time, women's suffrage should have been about abolishing all dominance structures, including racism, not just the suffrage of white women. Hooks was of the opinion that in order to successfully combat oppression in all of its forms, one needed to concentrate on all aspects of discrimination.

An early call to arms against intersectional oppression is represented by Sojourner Truth's well-known "Ain't I a Woman" speech. In the first part of her speech, Truth emphasizes the oppression that is shared "between the Negroes of the South and the women at the North," as well as her well-known line, "Ain't I a Woman?" influences the ladies that they also ought to have the same rights that they are struggling for. Unfortunately, her endeavours were all to no end as white women were just worried about their own freedoms. Similarly, in the struggle for civil rights, black men were unconcerned about women's rights because they were "unwilling to lose their own chance to gain the vote". This highlights the "double bind" that bell hooks identifies in her work "Ain't I a Woman," which is clearly a tribute to Truth's well-known speech. Because they were under the impression that if they acknowledged Black women, they



would lose their chance to escape oppression, white members of their own sex ignored them in the same way that male members of their own race ignored Black women.

4. This book has enclosed various subjects with key historical circumstances, comprising the effect of sexism on black women throughout the period of slavery, the devaluation of black femininity, black male sexism, and prejudice inside the feminist movement and the association of black women with feminism. From the 17th century to the 20th century, hooks discusses the expanse of pessimistic tropes used to undervalue black womanhood and how this changed. The most common negative stereotype about black women was that they were "sexually depraved, immoral, and loose," which came from slavery but stuck around for a long time.

Since white and black men were perceived as available and eager, this trope was used to justify the sexual assault of black women by both white and black women. Hooks also talked about how sexism split black men and women apart. Black women were conditioned to believe that "to cast a vote in favour of women's liberation was to cast a vote against black liberation," as stated by Hooks, during the civil rights movement. hooks makes a distinction between white feminism and black feminism in her book, arguing that because black women are at the bottom of the system, movements for change cannot be successful. The book also discusses the conflicts that existed between the patriarchal, capitalist, and imperialist systems. Hooks looks at how African-American women were treated as slaves in the past, how they were subjected to double oppression and widespread racism and sexism, and how this contributed to their low social status.

5. When slavery was finally abolished, the lives of black women did not improve. They discovered that they had no chance to improve their social status or resist oppression. Their position as slaves probably may have changed, but the assumption that black women were immoral and sexually corrupt continues to permeate the American psyche. The perspective of the white society that black women are encouraging white men to sexually assault them influenced the way black women were treated. And it's not just stereotypes about promiscuous sex that harm black women. There is also the myth of the black woman as a matriarchal figure, propagated and reinforced by white society. Due to their lower social status, black women worked tirelessly in low-paid service jobs to support families. It was male social scientists who highlighted the role of black women in labour and housework, calling them matriarchal and head of the household. The author argues that this matriarchal label has been used by racist scholars



to brainwash black women themselves. As a result, black women believe they have social and political power, economic security, reproductive rights, and political influence. In fact, they don't have. By accepting their matriarchal role, black women willingly accept their economic, sexist, and racist oppression while being subject to the black patriarchal system. However, as the author puts it, "No matriarchy ever existed in the United states." Gradually these patriarchal ideas entered into the black community, fueling tension between black men and women with deadly consequences.

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<b>That Long Silence : Shashi Deshpande</b>	

## STRUCTURE

### 4.0 Learning Objectives

### 4.1 Introduction

#### A Brief about the Author

### 4.2 Main Body of the Novel: That Long Silence

#### 4.2.1 Plot of the Novel

#### 4.2.2 Characters:

Jaya

Mohan

Ajji

Mukta

Jeeja

Nayana

Vimala

Kusum

Tara

Rati



Nilima

Mother of Mohan

Kamat

Asha

#### **4.3 Further Main Body of the Text: That Long Silence**

Reading the Novel in Detail

##### **4.3.1 Narrative Technique**

##### **4.3.2 Themes in the Novel**

A Woman's Journey to Self-discovery and Empowerment

The Power of Speaking Out

Marriage

Feminism

#### **4.4 Check Your Progress**

#### **4.5 Summary**

#### **4.6 Key Words**

#### **4.7 Self-Assessment Test**

#### **4.8 Answers to Check Your Progress**

#### **4.9 Suggested Reading**

### **4.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- To understand the transformation of perspective of woman from a traditional to a modern one
- To understand patriarchal society where male domination is supreme
- To understand the social restraints on all sections of women leading to their silence



- To understand failure of marriage system due to lack of communication
- To study indifferent attitude of males towards feelings and desires of women

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

That Long Silence is a novel written by Indian writer Shashi Deshpande. It was first published in 1988, and narrates the account of a scuffle of a woman to discover her own voice in a conventional Indian family. The main character, Jaya, has been depicted as a young wife and mother who undergoes a sort of suffocation because of the expectations from her role as a housewife. She starts speaking against the limitations put on her by her family as well as society, and this unleashes a sequence of events that will transform her life perpetually. That Long Silence is a dominant story about a voyage of a woman to discover herself and her empowerment. The journey of Jaya is not simple and easy, but it is eventually very enriching and rewarding. She comes across various challenges on the way, but every challenge tends to make her more powerful, stronger and self-confident. Towards the end of the novel, Jaya has been changed into a sturdy and independent female who is prepared to face the world. This novel is a sort of motivation and encouragement to every woman who is encountering scuffles in her life. It reflects that it is completely feasible to conquer hurdles and attain success if you are ready and willing to battle for what you desire. That Long Silence by Shashi Deshpande is a convincing story which is telling a drive of woman to self-finding and empowerment.

### A BRIEF ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shashi Deshpande has established herself as a renowned name in the field of Indian literature. She is known as an Indian feminist writer famous for writing stories on marriage, family life and hard work put in by Indian women under the pressure as well as expectations of the society. She has usually attempted to transform her personal experiences into stories.

She was born in the family of a great Sanskrit scholar and a well-known dramatist, Srirangain at Dharwad in Karnataka. She completed her education at various places like Dharwad, Bombay and Bangalore. Shashi Deshpande was a very intelligent and brilliant mind. She obtained degrees in Economics and Law. She was a gold medalist. She is regarded as one of the great writers of Indian



contemporary literature. She got married in 1922 to Dhirendra H. Deshpande, a medical doctor in a G.S. Medical College. She has two sons, Raghu and Vikram settled in London.

She shifted to Mumbai after her marriage and there she took a decision to strive for a course in Journalism. Consequently she got admitted in the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Afterwards, she started working as a journalist in the magazine "Onlooker", where she worked merely for a couple of months. During her job in the magazine, she started writing and her first short story got published in 1970. Slowly and steadily her stories started getting published in popular magazines like Femina, Eve's Weekly etc. Her initial collection of short stories was published in 1978, titled "The Legacy." She had also been a usual housewife without pursuing any career. She was very restless for being only a housewife and a mother. She used to feel isolated without any friends while in London. After coming back to India her husband motivated her to write down about her own experiences, resulting in the creation of her first book *The Legacy*. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* was her first novel which was published in 1980.

She had been very successful in writing a novel titled *That Long Silence*, for which she received a lot of admiration and appreciation and due to her wonderful work in this particular novel, she received the Sahitya Akademi Award and Nanjangud Thirumalamba Award. She has also been diligently implicated in writing books for children. Her renowned books for children are *Summer Adventure*, *The Hidden Treasure*, *The only witness*, *The Narayanpur Incident*. Her work mainly revolves around the lives and status of women in Indian society; her main target for her work is the Indian marketplace.

## **4.2 MAIN BODY OF THE NOVEL: THAT LONG SILENCE**

### **4.2.1 PLOT OF THE NOVEL**

The protagonist of *That Long Silence* Jaya takes birth into a middle-class family. In her youth she is presented as very intelligent, curious, and sharp, all qualities which are not accepted by conventional society. She is inspired by her grandmother to behave in a traditional way so as to get married to a decent boy, when grows up and tells her to be skilled in cooking, cleaning and other household job. She further tells her to be more adjusting and learn to be silent also to which she does



not agree. She is also told to learn to leave good impression on the in-laws in order to have good relationship with them in future.

Ultimately, Jaya becomes proficient enough to play the role of a submissive woman, while still preserving a perception of individuality. She is fond of writing in her leisure time, though she has not been able to become a successful author. While growing up, she realizes that usually people do not appreciate her expression of individuality so she learns to conceal it. Jaya regards this choking of herself and her viewpoints as “the long silence” as it extends itself from childhood to middle age. It is only her father who motivates her in her writing and also acknowledges her individuality.

After completing her education, she gets married to Mohan who is a successful entrepreneur. Both of them disagree on various things resulting in a sort of unhappy marriage and they are not very intimate. There is no place for Jaya to express herself at any point; she is expected by her husband to accept everything without any question. Jaya manages the household and also takes care of her husband just as her teenage children whereas Mohan earns for the family.

When her husband Mohan is suspended from his job because of delinquency on his part then Jaya in a way gets an opportunity to contemplate on what her life has become. Circumstances force both Jaya and Mohan to move out from their palatial apartment into a compact and shabby sort of flat and their children happen to stay back with relatives. Jaya starts writing more in order to further add on to family income. Some of the articles written by her are direct and unbarred about her discontentment, comprising the inability of her husband to connect with her or their children. However, Mohan does not seem to be happy with the article, but expresses nothing about it to Jaya. She just perceives this from his expression and it is strange that automatically and without any thought attempts to please him.

Mohan encounters more shame when he is discovered to be culpable of forgery at his job and dismissed. Kusum, Jaya’s sister, happens to visit Jaya and discusses about her husband, from whom she has recently parted. Jaya believes her as well as her sister’s husband possesses different faults but they have originated from the same cultural background where a woman is expected to behave as well as be treated by men in a certain way. Afterwards Jaya encounters her brother Ravi, who talks adversely about Mohan. When Mohan comes to know about this, he gets very angry with Jaya.



It is obvious that Mohan is in need of Jaya's affection and support while facing an adverse time, but both of them seem to lack congenial talking about their feelings and apprehensions with each other. Mohan fails to understand how to ask for what he requires, and Jaya also fails to know how to provide it. The situation gets more dreadful when their son, Rahul, elopes. Ultimately Mohan abandons the house.

While analyzing the reasons for their separation, Jaya recognizes that she is somewhat responsible for withdrawing from her husband during his testing time. She concedes that prolonged silence on her part has suffocated communication and frankness in her family, consequently making it tough to support her husband and vice a versa. Mr. Kamat, an aged man in her neighbourhood, assists Jaya to ponder through her emotions about herself as an individual and also her relation with her husband.

The book concludes with Mohan mailing a telegram to Jaya, conveying that he will come back home soon. Moreover, his office is also ready to take him back. Jaya is willing to welcome Mohan back into her life, and she pledges that in future she will never permit her long silence to part them from each other emotionally.

## 4.2.2 CHARACTERS

### JAYA

She is the main protagonist of the novel around whom the whole narration revolves. She is also the narrator of the story and narrates it in first person. That Long Silence is the portrayal of the protagonist Jaya's self realization which depicts women's complete conversion from pure traditional perspective to a refined and pure modern perspective. In presenting transformation of Jaya, various characters have contributed resulting in her transformation from a silent sufferer to a rebellion. After getting married, Jaya, who contemplates herself as self-sufficient and brilliant, transforms herself to meet the model of a wife as contemplated by her husband. She changes herself into a typecast woman: anxious, unskilled, always in need of male help and support. Actually she constantly keeps on changing herself according to the likes and dislikes of her husband. Consequently, she starts losing her individuality. After marriage, she is renamed Suhasini by her husband Mohan. The name Jaya conveys "Victory" and "Suhasini" reflects "a soft, smiling, placid, motherly woman".



She comprehends that a wife has no right to get angry because that negates the position of authority and command on the part of the husband. She also comprehends very well that in order to survive peacefully within marriage, one must learn some tricks and she feels that silence is one of them. Hence, she puts a cover of silence on her emotions and her physical desires, as according to social norms a woman has no right to communicate her physical desires. She has to relent to the wishes of her husband. Following this tradition, results in a frustrated married life. The hollowness of her marriage diverts her towards Kamat, a middle aged intellectual, with whom she develops a spiritual relation and who encourages her to come out of her silence.

In nutshell, Jaya is the principal character in the novel. Before getting married she has spent a very simple, happy life due to tender care and love given by her father. It is only after getting married that she comes to know about her state of despair found in every phase of her life as well as other women. The novel unfolds in the Old Dadar flat where Jaya along with husband Mohan has returned from their luxurious house, due to some inquiry initiated on her husband. Her children are away from the house due to a long tour. Free from her daily routine for the first time, she gets a chance to contemplate her childhood and her past life. She thinks of herself and her individuality. After her self-assessment, she emerges to be quite a winner as she has succeeded in understanding her various roles as a daughter in law, daughter, wife, mother and writer.

It appears that her conventional role as a woman, wife and mother has completely quashed her original self. No doubt, she seems to be enjoying a happy married life having an ideal family and material comforts, but the fixed schedule of life and monotony make her feel restless and uncomfortable. In her strive to rediscover her real self, she perceives herself as a failed wife, daughter-in-law, mother and a writer. She had various dreams for her life and hopes that, after marriage her life will achieve a new path but surprisingly her husband failed to understand her emotions leading her towards silence. Through her character, Deshpande attempts to depict an uncertain perspective of modern educated individualistic minded Indian women who fail to adapt themselves to the circumstances when their husbands don't care for them and smash their aspirations in life but at the same time they also find it difficult to shed them off, since the husbands for them is like a sheltering tree, without which they cannot even imagine to survive.



Jaya relishes her close friendship with Kamat with whom she dares to share her viewpoints, ideas, outlook, and her stories which she could never share with Mohan. She is full of admiration for him for giving her equal treatment as for him males and females are equal. She considers herself to be own self in his presence. No doubt, she is encouraged by Mohan to write but it is on the lines dictated by him. Her writing also offers her with an opportunity to break her silence. No doubt Jaya knows it very well that relationship between an outside man and woman for a married woman is not acceptable in the society. Still, she continues to keep her relationship with Kamat but it is also a fact that at the time of death of Kamat she fails to express herself due to social restrains.

The self-examination of her marital life brings forth the understanding on her part that she herself, to some extent, is responsible for her silence and the loss of her individuality. The seventeen years of their married life has resulted only in dullness and monotony in place of closeness and intimacy. She feels herself to be a failure as a wife also. In the time of crisis, Mohan seeks a kind of support and consolation from her but she fails to understand it and does not know what to offer him because of her silence. Her failure as an ideal wife and mother is revealed by her “I’ve failed him (Mohan). He expected something from me, from his wife, and I’ve failed him” Now she is able to realize the ultimate reason of their unhappy married life. She is able to comprehend the result of suppressed anger. And now for her, silence means suppressed anger only. And for her silence which actually means lack of communication results in matrimonial incompatibility. She resolves to shatter her extended silence in order to reinstate peace and satisfaction. Jaya completely recognizes that she herself has in a way subscribed to her victimization and now it is for her to brawl her own struggle and find out her own solution.

Towards the conclusion of the novel, Jaya comes on the surface as a strong and determined modern woman, who is ready to encounter life, acknowledge her responsibilities entirely and should not make an effort to avoid them. Jaya recognizes that it is only mutual understanding. Respect for each other and compassion can result in relevant coexistence of both man and woman. Attitude full of domination as well as complete submission will lead to a disaster. Jaya’s positive view towards life, that there is always scope for transformation exhibits the transformation which she has gone through.

## MOHAN



He is the husband of Jaya. After their marriage, after staying for a short time in Lohanagar, Bombay, they moved to the Dadar Flat. At that time financial condition of Mohan was not very sound. Mohan has grown up while facing many difficulties since his childhood. His only goal in life seems to be to overcome his economic crisis and secure a comfortable upper class lifestyle. Mohan was from a poor Brahmin family. Once he participated in a program at Crossword House in Saptagiri, where he happened to see three English speaking women. He was very much impressed and inspired by their lavish lifestyle and started dreaming of such kind of life. He feels so much fascinated by those three graceful women that the only yardstick he lays down for his future wife is to be educated and cultured wife, who can speak good English. He gets ready to get married to Jaya only because she is an educated woman and speaks good English.

Mohan has consistently attempted to secure his financial stability; both legally and illegally. While working at Lohanagar as a Junior Engineer at a cement plant, an inquiry was placed against him. In his efforts to please the Chief Engineer he also wanted Jaya to intimate with his wife so that he can take advantage of it. But later on he himself succeeded in managing the CE and got transferred to Purchase department in his office in Bombay which helped him to get into a luxurious govt. residence at Churchgate.

Now despite having all, Mohan is not at all satisfied. He wishes to achieve more heights so that he never suffers from poverty. Silence of Jaya is in a way responsible for his dishonest acts as she never asks a question. No doubt, he is an adamant person who is bound to achieve his goals but Jaya could have warned or prohibited him. It is Mohan, who plays major role in her silence.

Parents of Jaya were progressive and liberal minded. They did not make any difference between sons and daughters. Her mother is different from other women of her time in her attitude. At first she was not ready to give her daughter's hand to Mohan thinking them to be orthodox and old fashioned people. Later on, because of orthodox nature of Mohan, Jaya slowly becomes silent. Even during their intimate relationship, he fails to understand the desires of Jaya. Egoistic nature of Mohan combined with the absence of powerful emotional bond between them has developed rebellious impulse in Jaya.

Mohan feels very proud to as his wife is a writer but permits her to write on the streaks drawn by him only. When she has just initiated as a writer, he disapproves of a story written by her on the grounds that



the characters depicted in the story bear resemblance to them, and people will start thinking of him as the one portrayed by her in the story.

When he is suspended from his job he realizes as if Jaya is not taking much care of him may be due to crisis erupted in his life. Feeling shattered, he fails to understand what to do. He anticipates his wife Jaya to share his apprehensions, anxiety, his gloominess and his uncertainty and also expected of her to speak emphatically and help him in facing the crisis. He states that whatever he has done, it has been for his family and not only to fulfill his aspiration of good high society life. He just desires to make use of his wife as a shield.

Actually, he is looking for an emotional support from Jaya. It is very much obvious that he is in need of Jaya's help and love in this testing phase but neither of them has ever been comfortable talking about their feelings and fears with each other. Mohan has no idea how to ask for what he needs, and Jaya has no idea how to offer it. The situation becomes even awful when the couple's son, Rahul, runs away from home. Ultimately, Mohan leaves the house. But towards the end, we find Jaya receiving a telegram from him saying that he is returning as the inquiry is complete and the company is going to reinstate him.

## **AJJI**

The oldest female character in the novel portrays the position of widowhood. Ajji, "a shaven widow" is the grandmother of Jaya. In these lines the word "shaven" refers to the public embarrassment of shaving off the head of Hindu widow throughout her life. The word "widow" is symbolic of robbing every kind of happiness from her life which she used to enjoy previously. Ajji is living an entirely isolated life devoid of all kinds of luxury and happiness in life. She has been presented as a very conventional and traditional kind of woman who wishes Jaya to be skilled in cooking and other household chores to be a perfect woman and future bride. She also advises her to learn to be silent, to be more accommodating and adjusting as per expectations of society to perform all the roles perfectly and also to maintain good relationship with in-laws in future to which Jaya does not agree. She is actually a strong woman who is successful in holding the family together.

## **MUKTA**



She is Jaya's neighbour at her Daddar flat. She is a widow who has been described as a dancer who fails to express her emotions and feelings freely. She has been presented by Jaya as a dancer as well as a widow. Her husband dies by falling off from the train, and she has been living with endless sorrow. She is all alone but at the same time fighting two battles. One is of widowhood and other of solitude. Mukta is an educated woman yet she fails to set herself unconfined from the conservative, futile standards and imprisonment of loneliness due to the fear of society.

### **JEEJA**

She is the maid of Jaya who is not able to deliver a child, leading her husband to a second marriage. According to norms of society inability to give birth to a child is like a curse for the family. So later on, Jeeja feels that her husband is right in getting married for the second time so she does not protest as not giving birth to a child is a kind of misfortune for her. The silence of Jeeja appears to be very relaxing to Jaya and she seems to be one of the powerful characters who forces Jaya to rethink over her consciousness as a woman.

Basically she is a realistic and practical woman. She understands her worth as an efficient worker. She is badly in need of money earned by her. Being a good worker she recognizes that it was her popularity for being very reliable which helps her to earn better than other servants. She is a very professional as far as her work is concerned which makes her stand apart from other servants and she feels proud of that rare thing among them; a pure professional, and proud of it. Sometimes Jaya feels jealous of her single-mindedness. She fully comprehends her purpose of living which is to keep on living. Suffering and tolerance is part of it therefore she tolerates all that she has to.

### **NAYANA**

She is a sweeper. Nayana holds a very indifferent sort of attitude towards life. She desires a son not for the reason that she does not want any kind of help from him in her old age nor does she desire to have daughters because she does not want them to suffer in the hands of their husbands like her. She has already delivered four children. In spite of this, her husband keeps on threatening that he will move out of her life. He wants her company to fulfill his essential needs only. Her husband is a very hard hearted person who is least bothered about her and his children. Because of this indifferent attitude of him, two baby boys died soon after their birth and only baby girls survived.



## VIMALA

She is the sister of Mohan and seems to be the real victim of silence and embodiment of helplessness in a way leading to her death. She does not have the courage to discuss her sufferings and problems with anyone as she knew that her problems do not have any solution since according to the system of a society childless woman is like a curse on society and raising a voice against husband as well as society is like a blot. Basically, she is very kind-hearted woman. She is suffering from some medical problem and when is taken to the doctor it is too late for surgery. So she slips into silence resulting in sinking into coma and she died a week later.

## KUSUM

Kusum is a distant cousin of Jaya who has been going through the disease of mental imbalance. She is in need of warm and compassionate care. Jaya wishes to give her the care required by her at her last stage, so she brings her to her home. But Mohan was not in favour of it and attempted hard to discourage Jaya from bringing her to stay with them in her sickness. Sometimes because of her perplexed state of mind, she vexes Jaya but being a woman, there is always something which seems to be hidden behind her silence which forces Jaya to resist when Mohan tries to stop her from helping her. It is for the first time in her life that Jaya has literally fought with her husband. The pathetic condition of Kusum in a way is awakening Jaya about women. The indifferent attitude of her family towards her is also playing its part in creating awareness in Jaya. Despite being told by Jaya that her family does not seem to be in need of her, her reply that she needs them, makes Jaya silent and she is not able to give any answer to it.

## TARA

Tara is daughter in law of Jeeja who is married to Raja Ram, her step son. Following the footsteps of his father, he is also a drunkard and in the habit of beating his wife Tara. But Tara is little bit different in a way that she does not adopt silence of Jeeja. She wails, sobs about her fate and also curses her husband for his behaviour. Now she takes care of their batata wada business and if she does not give money to her husband, she has to bear beating from him.

## RATI



She is the daughter of Jaya, who is more confident as compared to her mother. Rati has been very comfortable in accepting womanhood whereas the reaction of Jaya was totally different when she stepped into womanhood through menstruation. For Jaya, the experience has been very agonizing and terrible but according to Rati, she knew everything and was not worried about it.

### **NILIMA**

She is the daughter of Mukta who is a good neighbour of Jaya. Nilima usually visits Jaya's house to give her company. Contrary to her mother Nilima, is a sort of rebel who is a straightforward kind of personality and wants to live her life to the fullest. Through the portrayal of Nilima, Shashi Deshpande attempts to discuss the matter of menstruation, which has been regarded as a hurdle, an obstruction in leading an unbound life by women. Unlike other women Nilima does not feel ashamed of it rather she takes it as her enemy and wants to get rid of it in some way

### **MOTHER OF MOHAN**

She has to bear a lot because of the egoistic nature of his father along with his male dominating attitude. Despite bearing so much of suffering and pain from his father, she decides to be silent. That is the reason that Mohan tends to find strength in the silence of Jaya but sees despair. Her children both Vimla and Mohan are also witness to her sufferings in the hands of their father. Vimla, tells Jaya that throughout her childhood she recollects her mother being pregnant. She was not interested in keeping the last child, she already had lost four or five babies by then, and she was distressed. Physically also she was very weak. She in a way reflects her hidden woman's consciousness when she went to a midwife and attempted to get herself aborted.

### **KAMAT**

He is an elderly neighbour of Jaya. He is a widower and living alone. He is the character who encourages and motivates Jaya to come out of her shell. Kamat confirms himself to be her real friend, philosopher and guides her to inculcate self- confidence, strength and thinking capacity to ponder over the definition and message of her own existence. Kamat aspires her to proceed further to listen to her internal feelings and contemplate whatever is real for her. He keeps on reminding her about her possibilities and capabilities of doing something exceptional which being a human being she is able



to do, which she deserves to do. He says, “Take yourself seriously woman. Don’t sulk behind a false name. “And work-work, if you want others to take you seriously”. She does not feel content with her married life. She is tired of it. She desires to talk to Mohan. She yearns to apprise Mohan but something is stopping her from doing this. When she inquires from Kamat about it Kamat makes her aware of her fear of failure. Imagining the unfavourable outcomes of the speech one should not stop speaking whatever is true. He makes her realize that in order to achieve a stabilized marriage life, there needs to be a balanced association between ego and self. These inspiring words of Kamat inspire emotional behaviour of Jaya and help her understand that everyone has to struggle to advocate his or her own cause. He is the male character who has been presented in a different light as compared to other males. Instead of suppressing the female, he seems to be the motivation behind awareness of Jaya. He has a spiritual kind of relationship with Jaya not the physical one. Jaya feels herself very frank in front of him. He is the only male character shown in positive light.

## **ASHA**

She is sister in law of Jaya and different from characters like Vimla. Her husband Ravi is a man who lives by “drifting on the edge of dishonesty”. He does not possess a constant job. On a specific day, Jaya happens to visit her sister-in-law’s house. There she happens to observe a big fight between husband and wife. Jaya was aware about the fights common between them but Asha has been portrayed as a courageous one with the support of her father. She is the only character who has been portrayed in this light.

## **4.3 FURTHER MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT: THAT LONG SILENCE**

### **READING THE NOVEL IN DETAIL**

The title of the novel has been chosen from the speech of a suffragette, Elizabeth Robbins, about the everlasting and extensive silence of women, to the Women Writers Suffrage League (WWSL) in 1907 and an extract from the speech, "If I were a man and cared to know the world I live in, I almost think it would make me a shade uneasy, the weight of that long silence of one-half the world," was selected to be the epigraph of the novel as well which lays down the tone of the narration also. The whole narrative



takes place in the background of only a few houses in Bombay, the luxurious bungalow at Church gate, the dingy flat at Dadar and the houses in Saptagiri and Ambegaon.

That Long Silence mainly revolves around the life of the protagonist, Jaya who is leading a happy married life with her engineer husband Mohan and two children; Rahul and Rati. Apart from looking after her family, she also writes articles for magazine. Apparently they are enjoying comfortable life in a luxurious house at Church gate, but this same schedule of their every day life for the last seventeen years makes Jaya feels monotonous which makes her pray to the God for some disastrous change in their lives to break the boredom of their lives and that disaster comes which disturbs their whole life. An inquiry has been ordered against her husband Mohan who is an engineer in the purchase section of his office on the charge of some unfair and dishonest dealings. Afraid of being caught, he shifts to small and dingy flat at Dadar along with his wife Jaya.

At Dadar, Jaya seems to get a sort of break from her bustling everyday family life and gets enough time to distract herself, to indulge in self-analysis. She has not shifted to Dadar as she desired to do the analysis of her problems and to find solution for them but she was there as her husband has told her to do so without asking her. He has come here to hide and being her husband that she would follow her silently.

Whilescrutinizing her childhood and past life Jaya fails to recognize any kind of similarity between her personality before marriage and after marriage. The energetic Jaya, who had a dream of going for study at Oxford University, settles down to ponder about how she has completely transformed to an entirely yielding and silent one. She recognizes how other women she has come across throughout her life, for instance her mother, grandmother, cousin Kusum, widowed neighbor Mukta, and all other women in general, have been preserving the indistinguishable silence from the hundreds of years.

After getting married Jaya and Mohan lived in Lohanagar, Bombay for a short time and then they shifted to their Dadar flat. Mohan who has grown up facing many hardships in his life once happened to see three elegant and English speaking women in some program and he was so impressed with them that on the spot decided to get married to an educated, cultured and English speaking girl in future as a wife, so that is the reason for getting married to Jaya. At the time of marriage, he was not financially



very sound but he was adamant to achieve his goal of financial security to lead a comfortable upper middle class lifestyle. In his boyhood, Mohan was a son of poor Brahmin family.

Mohan has always made an effort to remain economically strong both in a legal as well illegal way. In the beginning of their life, an inquiry was placed against him at cement plant Lohanagar. He wanted Jaya to be friendly with the wife of Chief Engineer so as to take advantage of it but somehow he himself managed and got himself transferred to Purchase Department in his office in Bombay and moved to a luxurious bungalow allotted by government at Church gate Bombay. Now they have all that which they have desired for but Mohan does not stop here. He is desirous of more and more. He is determined never to suffer from poverty.

Silence of Jaya to some extent is also responsible for the dishonest acts of Mohan. No doubt, Mohan is determined to achieve his personal goals, being a wife, Jaya could have warned or prohibited him but instead, like a true Gandhari, she follows him keeping her eyes shut without asking any question.

Mohan's contribution towards the silence of Jaya is very significant. Being a son of an orthodox Brahmin family, he has grown up observing dominant patriarchal views prevalent in his family since childhood. Whereas parents of Jaya were broad minded and liberal minded. For them there was no difference between son and daughter, so Jaya had never been taken as a liability by them. Her father always stimulated and motivated Jaya to follow her dreams. He always tried to make her feel someone special and different from others. He gave her the name Jaya, which for him was Jaya for victory. Even her mother was very much different from other women in her attitude. Some of the women have been presented as anxious about the colour of the skin of their daughters being a little darker, but she was least worried, "Does the colour of one's skin matter?" . Initially she was not in favour of the marriage and disapproved of it as for living in the same area she was aware of their background saying "they're orthodox, old-fashioned people". Her fears come true when later in the life because of orthodox nature of Mohan and also his responses to various situations Jaya is pushed into a silence.

In the initial days of their marriage, once Mohan and Jaya got into an intense argument over Jaya's calling his mother 'a cook'. The temper of Jaya was blazed and Mohan was astonished as he did not expect such kind of behaviour from his wife which was completely unacceptable, "How could you? I never thought my wife could say such things to me. You're my wife . . . “. Then onwards he stopped



talking to Jaya and it was only when Jaya got a little subdued that he returned to his usual self. At that point Jaya recognized that an expression of more power by women hurts the patriarchal ego of males.

Under the pressure of Jaya's grandmother, Aiji, father of Jaya, dumped his dream of getting connected to Gandhi's ashram, and as an expression of his anger, he left his studies and job and established a business as a partner in the printing press. After failing in the adventure of business ventured into marriage and left home. Jaya's uncle Chandu mama also came under the pressure of his mother; Aiji, and as a result stopped following his F.R.C.S. degree and ultimately had to be satisfied by ending up as a small town doctor but after that he failed to live a contented life. He got married but lacked any kind of feelings towards his wife. Later on, he did not hesitate from having affairs with different women including housemaid. All these examples reflected the patriarchal ego.

Mohan apprised Jaya, "My mother never raised her voice against my father, however badly he behaved to her", and Jaya started controlling her anger, "to hold it on a leash". She realized the expectations of Mohan from her and also learns to behave in a controlled manner for peace. After observing the life of women at Mohan's house, where they had to follow a certain code of conduct, she was able to differentiate between the lives of women at their parents' house and at their in-law's house. Jaya had not been brought up by her mother as an ordinary and typical woman holding patriarchal views, "she had prepared me for none of the duties of a woman's life". So Jaya failed to comprehend that leaving an unstitched button on the shirt of her husband is her fault. But in order to lead a peaceful and healthy family life, she transformed her manner of viewing things, "These women of Mohan's family were right, I had decided. I would pattern myself after them. That way lay – well, if not happiness, at least the consciousness of doing right, freedom from guilt". If she is appreciated for performing her role perfectly Jaya says, "I almost wag my tail, like a dog that's been patted by its master".

After their marriage, Jaya believes in intimacy before establishing any relationship between husband and wife but on the contrary in the relationship of husband and wife the husband is authorized to play his role without developing emotional bond with his wife. He does not believe in the notion of 'love' resulting in developing physical relations in silence, Mohan is least bothered about the interest and desires of Jaya or also in what and how she feels. Even Jaya does not feel like revealing anything. After the act is over according to the wishes of Mohan, Mohan only asks, "Did I hurt you?", and Jaya's reply is always as expected "No". One night, Jaya happened to respond to Mohan ardently which made



Mohan turn away. Jaya feels devastated and embarrassed leading to crying, without making any sound so as not to disturb her husband. Mohan never tries to know his wife or her wishes Jaya says, "We had never come together, only our bodies had done that".

With the passage of time silence becomes her habit which she keeps on numerous occasions even when she has an opportunity to express herself. She avoids doing those things which hurt her husband. Observing the predicament of some Army families on the street, once Mohan indicated his astonishment to Jaya that how could the husbands of those Army families commit such an offensive thing that placed their families in such a catastrophe. At this point being aware of what Mohan himself has done, she felt like giving him fitting reply but kept silent. Wishes of Mohan are most important and the house runs merely on his wishes, and Jaya "went along with him". She still is not aware of what she wants or desires. Before her marriage she was told by her grandmother that asking so many questions will put her in an uncomfortable situation in the house of her husband. Therefore, she has left that habit of asking questions but despite that she never, get any comfort,

Father of Jaya was fond of Indian classical music, but like other people of that time she liked film music which according to her father was of cheap standard and devoid of quality. She felt ashamed and that feeling still persists. One day when they got late for a movie and Mohan persuaded her by saying that they will miss only ads which are worthless, she could not express that she liked them lest Mohan consider her taste cheap like her father, so she remained silent.

After coming back to Dadar, Mohan fails to think of what to do therefore he asks suggestions from Jaya. She couldn't say anything to him. Now when relatives of Mohan come to him look for his help on various matters at different times, Mohan becomes disturbed, then Jaya lacks the courage to tell him that it was he who often told them to come to him for any kind of help to show his power. Jaya maintains silence when she observes having more concern for his niece Revati than his own son. A moment comes, when Jaya feels scared that Mohan will die but at that time also lacks the guts to express that frantic feeling to him. When Jaya fails to find her name in the family tree shown to him by Ramu kaka, she feels that it would be in the family tree of her husband's family but then feels surprised to see the names of her married female relatives missing from the tree. She wanted to question Ramu kaka but failed and there was no question of asking even Mohan.



Once a writing of Jaya got published and she also received a prize for it but Mohan was not happy with its subject matter as according to him it reflected their personal life although there was nothing like this in the story but Mohan felt badly hurt. This reaction of Mohan compels Jaya to stop writing though Mohan has not told her to do so, then once again Jaya became silent. After observing his affected face. Despite this decision, Jaya did write some compositions, but those seemed to be confined, self-examined, and defended sort of so that nobody felt bad and she also came up to the expectations of the society, but she was least satisfied with what she was writing. Noticing her anger and disgust, Kamat recommended, "Express your anger in your writing". but she was aware that there were no more options. She is devoid of that liberty in her society. She knew very well that women do not possess the right to be angry, so she asked Kamat, "Have you ever heard of an angry young woman?"

After marriage, the name of Jaya was changed by Mohan from Jaya to "Suhasini". And slowly she had to change herself from Jaya 'victory' to 'Suhasini' "a soft, smiling, placid, motherly woman, a woman who lovingly nurtured her family. Jaya began to read magazines for women with the subject matter how to keep men happy. In order to please Mohan, she got her beautiful hair cut short "like Mehra's wife". Further to please him she dressed like the upper middle class women without any question. Just like the condition of sparrow in the story 'the crow (a male) and the sparrow (a female) the concern of the Suhasini' was her own family. However, now Jaya realizes that this story will have long life effect on the subconscious mind of the girls, whose theme is, "Stay at home, look after your babies, keep out the rest of the world, and you're safe".

Apart from Jaya, other women in the society are also compelled to maintain silence in order to survive in the patriarchal society which has given undue power to men to get angry with wives and also to beat them as they wish. The behaviour of the father of Mohan was very cruel towards his wife but she kept on fulfilling her responsibilities silently without any question. His sister Vimla informs her that her mother died silently while going through an abortion. Her mother failed to express her sufferings and condition to anyone. Despite considering the condition of her mother deplorable, Vimla herself dies silently. She does not share her sufferings because of ovarian cancer with anybody. Jeeja, her house maid at Dadar flat, also remains silent. As she could not bear children so her husband got married for the second time and she was silently raising his two children after the death of his second wife. She



casually accepts her predicament without any anger. Despite all this, she explains the importance of kumkum to her step daughter.

Mukta, a widow neighbour of Jaya in Dadar, is silently living her life. Indian women usually fast for the long life of their husband but even after the death of her husband since it is difficult to change habits. In our Indian society, sons are always given more importance than daughters. A son is responsible for taking the family heritage forward; he is considered like the lamp of the family; he has been given the right to lit the pyre; a son is regarded as the support for the parents in their old age wealth to come to the house; he is a support system for the parents in their old age, sons are also regarded as source of income for the family and so, a son is lovable. That is why girls fail to get much attention and love in their families. The cousin of Jaya, Kusum does not receive much attention from her parents, whereas their son Dilip gets so much of love and attention.

Nayana, the sweeper despite delivering four daughters, is still trying for a son. When Arun, husband of Mukta, dies, her relatives try to console the pregnant Mukta saying that a son will be born who would support her. Besides, the works of the girls and boys are divided which has been accepted silently by girls. When someone asks why the boys are not cooking and cleaning, the women themselves start laughing at the question because it has become ingrained in their minds that these are the chores to be done by women only.

The married life of Jaya has been following the same pattern for the last 17 years, but this specific scam on the part of Mohan has disturbed the balance of their life. Mohan tries to get his action justified by Jaya "It was for you and the children that I did this." This makes Jaya very angry from inside and she wanted to revert back but kept silent. Later, when she is informed by her husband to shift into Dadar flat, she follows him without any questions like the commemorated and usually honoured mythological characters like Sita, Savitri and Draupadi. Although the thing that astonishes Jaya is Mohan "had assumed I would accompany him, had taken for granted my acquiescence in his plans". It hits her, and she recognizes her position and also her value for her husband. Before getting married, Jaya was vibrant and lively, but now she is not able to find any resemblance between Jaya before marriage and Jaya after marriage.



While sitting at Dadar flat with plenty of leisure time, when she goes through her diaries she finds Jaya missing everywhere, the mother and the wife being more dominant. Placing those diaries together, she reflects that the more accurate title of these diaries should be "The Diaries of a Sane Housewife", and therefore she proclaims to Mohan, "I know you better than you know yourself" as the only job of Jaya is to look after Mohan. Gazing at her forgotten days as depicted in those writings, Jaya discovers what was actually missing in those diaries. Jaya explains the relationship between her and her husband when they are about to enter their Dadar flat to hide as "A pair of bullocks yoked together". Jaya just devours Mohan's assertion that Mohan has just observed a dishonest way only for the sake of his family since any reaction on the part of Jaya here will aggravate the circumstances. In all aspects therefore Jaya, as usual, chooses to remain silent. Jaya strides cautiously and accommodates to situations.

Though, she could not instantly protest this offensive statement made by Mohan, she indirectly vents out her rage by not giving the keys of the flat to open the door, when he asks for the keys instead she herself opens the door and moves inside leaving him behind. Probably Mohan has acknowledged his defeat. Actually the reality is that Mohan is so preoccupied with the current disruption in his career that he fails to comprehend what is happening around him or with him. So if something like this had happened at some other times, Mohan would have shown his real self. Further this slight rebellion expressed on the part of Jaya does not leave much impression on Mohan, so this act fails to grab his attention.

Usually they all were preoccupied in their daily routine, Jaya with her family and household duties and Mohan in his office. Suddenly their daily schedule is disturbed and they have ample time in their hands. But both of them now do not know what to do. It seems as if both are suffering from post-modern anxiety; Mohan appears to be uneasy and restless, whereas women have been suffering from this waiting game since ages.

Jaya too has been a sufferer in the hands of this waiting game since her marriage. Though outwardly it seems as if this game is over for Jaya in Dadar, but Mohan always seems to be suffering from a kind of psychological breakdown, always worried about an insatiable future, the foundation of the relationship between them appears to be shaken. Just like Jaya, Mohan also holds some personal ghosts. Frequently he sinks himself in the past memories of his poverty stricken childhood, parents, and difficulties faced by him.



Mohan was desperately in search of some way out, desolately waiting for some positive news. Jaya happens to meet her brother Ravi who talks about the problems. Mohan is undergoing a kind of casual meeting between siblings but it surprisingly annoys Mohan. He becomes angry with Jaya on why Jaya did not try to find out more from Ravi about what information he had about Mohan's scam. Jaya is completely shattered under the constraints of Mohan's perception of those three females in the Crossroad House. Jaya is at the verge of breaking the barricade of tolerance yet she does not have the courage to say anything; rather she turns out to be speechless under the influence of Mohan's anger. The 'Suhasini' within her is nearly dead.

In the opinion of Mohan, all women usually possess indifferent attitudes and Jaya is almost the same. Since his time of trouble, he feels that Jaya has been indifferent towards him. Despite taking his family as his priority, Jaya has become totally indifferent to him in the hour of crisis. He further adds that she has actually never cared for him. Hearing this, Jaya is surprised at what she, then, has been doing for the last 17 years.

At the time of her marriage, her relatives gave her several pieces of advice. Jaya has tried to put in all her efforts to follow those advices for a long happy and peaceful life and despite making so many sacrifices for the family now. Mohan was accusing her of not caring about him. This objection turns out to be completely intolerable for her and her sense of tolerance comes to an end and she bursts into a fit of laughter. It was actually "hysteria" on the part of Jaya. After sometime when she is pacified, she discovers herself alone in the room. Mohan moves out of the house completely upset and in silence and desperation Jaya gets afraid that probably, Mohan has left her forever. She consoles herself that Mohan will definitely return but Jaya feels disoriented and totally isolated without Mohan. Jaya starts waiting for Mohan, leading to psychological breakdown.

Kusum and Kamat, both of these characters play an important role in Jaya's characterization. Jaya becomes very firm in her decision to take care of the mentally sick Kusum. She is ready to face all the social opinions to take care of her, but when she ultimately resolves to leave Kusum in her predicament, after going back to her home after a few days Kusum, commits suicide by jumping into a waterless well. It hurts her badly. She begins to think that she may undergo the same condition if she becomes useless to others in future. Therefore, she starts performing her duties with more devotion. She started feeling her own existence through Kusum.



Kamat was like an outlet for expression of Jaya's emotions. She felt liberated to open her heart in front of him. A kind of ease and effortlessness was prevalent between them. She was in her own self in his company. Like a true and faithful well-wisher, Kamat always provided her with feedback on her creative work as well as personality issues. At present Kusum and Kamat are no more and only Mohan is there for Jaya but he also leaves her completely alone.

After a few days when she does not receive any news of Mohan, she assumes that probably Mohan is no more. After the departure of Mohan, the kind of tempest that Jaya has gone through, the helplessness which she has suffered, the fear of being left in isolation and the realization and awareness of being rejected and deserted completely shatters her. She undergoes a complete transformation. She finds that she is no more an old Jaya or present Suhasini. She declares that even if Mohan comes back, "We couldn't go on as before. We had come to the end of this road", she evaluates and acknowledges the reality of their relationship. Jaya makes an attempt to calm down herself, but it's just her anger which swells inside. She has modified herself completely according to the desires of Mohan during her entire married life, and now abruptly she comes to realize herself as a complete failure.

In the meantime, the news about disappearance of her son Rahul who along with their family friends has gone on a trip to South India arrive, which makes her feel more dejected. Now she considers herself as a failure as a mother also who failed to understand her son properly. After encountering bitter experiences in her life she had decided to be a very good and perfect mother and after so many years of sacrificing she has been proved a failure as a mother also which leads to further deterioration of her mental condition. Under the stress of so much thinking, being at the verge of losing control over herself, she moves out of the house and comes back almost in an unconscious condition and suffering from fever from being soaked in rain. She feels petrified for being alone. Throughout her life like a sparrow she has always attempted to keep her family safe and sound but now she is being proved a failure in every role.

Now that she has accepted herself as a failure in the role of mother as well as wife, she is no longer scared. Now the objective of a happy family also vanishes from her mind. Till now she has made every effort to become wife of Mohan by putting every other thing aside but now onwards she discovers that she won't be able to do so anymore. Suddenly She recalls and feels motivated by the Sanskrit words scribbled in her father's diary, "Yathechchasi tatha kuru" (192), meaning 'Do as you desire.'



Eventually she receives a telegram from Mohan mentioning his return, but she is no longer the old Jaya. Jaya becomes aware that she herself is responsible for her present state. She realizes that a long silence has prevented her from supporting her husband in his phase of crisis and vice versa. She understands that it is hard for the people to change but at the same time also hopes that steadily with the passage of time it will surely happen. Consequently, it was the birth of a new Jaya.

Some critics feel that Deshpande has failed to offer any solution to the troubles and problems displayed in her novels, but that is only a restricted perspective. Maximum individuals lead a life of hopelessness without perceiving what their problem is, but her protagonists intensely explore their problems and make an attempt to comprehend what is happening to them and why. Her protagonists get aware of their problems, which seems to be their first step towards the solution. Jaya also announces to eliminate the silence prevailing between her and her husband. And this appears to be the significant step towards the final solution.

### 4.3.1 NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

Shashi Deshpande has not used basic and simple technique of unfolding the story in the novel, *That Long Silence*. In order to make the story more authentic, Deshpande takes help of first person narrative to portray the subconscious of the modern middle-class learned woman. To seduce the attention of the reader she implements the flashback method. The first chapter deals with the present, but the later chapters are more an achronic with the final chapter ending in the present. The first chapter of the novel in a way deals with the present, but the later chapters are engrossed in recollections of the past followed by the final chapter ending in the present. In the words of Critic Sharma, "It is a device which is useful when some elements of suspense are needed for this novel. Chronologically, charity is essential as the reader already has to cope with an abundance of characters and their complex interactions."

The narrator Jaya in this novel is the protagonist of the story. While giving account of her distressing encounters, her mind quivers and she reveals her entire life; since her days of childhood till the death of her father, she is a prototypical modern woman who holds roots in tradition, whereas her husband Mohan, a conservative person, bears his roots in customs. Their point of view is entirely different and they are not able to comprehend each other. As a result of different outlooks their married life falls apart and becomes a disaster. It is more of a compromise because of social



pressure than love and mutual understanding and need of each other. Deshpande displays the consciousness of Jaya by presenting a description of pondering, perceiving and retaliating to the incitation of the moment as well as situation going on in her mind. While doing so, she proceeds to propound the feminine persona of the protagonist, to cut off the stronghold of the shackles of a social structure having their roots in patriarchy which revolts as it captivates. Jaya is a contemporary dilemma and the deluge of awareness that ensues out of it is a reticent flow of ideas and emotions.

She is very much aware that in order to carry on with any relationship one needs to learn a number of tactics and silence is one of them. Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* is in a way an embodiment of the silence of the contemporary Indian wife. The attempt of other writers in revealing this silence had modified the woman into nobody; they were successful in presenting conceptual profundity to their characters. They either produced imaginary emotional romances or eventually yielded to the impulse of the mouthing ideology of feminist. But Shashi Deshpande's achievement rests on her depiction of real-life experience. She pragmatically depicts the internal disputes of Jaya and her pursuit for self or her own identity.

*That Long Silence* is actually a gem of work since the Stream of Consciousness technique has been used by the author in a most creative and thrilling manner. Jaya in an unnatural way unfolds her story in small segments and sections moving back and forward with notable gratification and edges on the incoherent which fundamentally prefers the Stream of Consciousness technique.

#### **4.3.2 THEMES IN THE NOVEL**

##### **A WOMAN'S JOURNEY TO SELF-DISCOVERY AND EMPOWERMENT**

*That Long Silence* narrates the saga of a struggle of an Indian woman who tries to recognize her own voice in a conventional Indian family. She feels asphyxiated due to various limitations put on her by the society and also so many expectations from her of her role. Circumstances lead her to stand against these restrictions, which towards the end of the story bring a transformation in her life. In order to bring that transformation, she has to fight with so many prevalent issues in her life and towards the end comes victorious as she self discovers herself and attains empowerment. She belongs to a conservative family where women are advised to learn to adapt and accommodate to settle down in their married life. They are not encouraged to pursue their interests and ambitions but Jaya wants something else from life. With



the passage of time she ultimately realizes that in order to have true happiness in life she should stand up for herself. Since the first day of her marriage, her husband Mohan fails to recognize her as Jaya (victorious). He gives her a new name 'Suhasini' which means "soft, smiling, placid, motherly woman". With the change of name, she feels as if her identity has been compromised and starts feeling bewildered. 'Suhasini' becomes symbolic of a perfectionist and meticulous housewife, meant only to care and look after her children and also manage the home well in an orderly way.

Towards the end, she comes to realize that by remaining only mother and wife and by ignoring her other aspect of herself, a writer, she will fail to survive as a complete woman. Ultimately she decides to carry on with her writing career and would stop looking at Mohan for an answer she desires. The novel concludes with her strong decision to speak, to shatter her long silence now. Now she has been able to discover an answer for the most evocative question "Who am I?" Towards the end, when she receives a telegram from Mohan from Delhi stating that all is well now, she heeds slightest significance to which reflects her realization of self-discovery and empowerment.

### **THE POWER OF SPEAKING OUT**

When Jaya happens to meet her future husband for the first time, she is instantly impressed with his confidence and effortless conversation. These are the qualities which are actually lacking by her; she tends to feel tongue-tied and embarrassed in social situations. This is the initial quality because of which she feels attracted to him. Nonetheless, during the course of their marriage, Jaya discovers that the confidence of her husband is a disguise for a sense of profound insecurity. He is all the time looking for authentication from others and is very swift to anger when he realizes that he is not getting it. It results in a kind of tension in their relationship, since Jaya starts feeling that she can never really be herself around her husband.

One day, there creeps up another argument, leading Jaya to ultimately break her silence and tell her husband that she already had endured enough. Now she is exhausted from walking on eggshells and posing to be someone which she is actually not. It is a sort of liberating instant for her, and ultimately she now realizes that she can truly be herself.

From this juncture, Jaya starts speaking out more in her own life. She learns to convey her viewpoints more, and slowly and steadily she starts building up the confidence to pronounce herself.



She understands that it is a process which is time consuming, but finally, she transforms into a strong and confident woman and who vows not to allow this extended silence to come between herself and her husband and within herself. As to some extent she makes her long silence responsible for bringing a kind of distrust in her marriage also which made her incapable to understand the support needed by her husband at time of crisis.

## **MARRIAGE**

The author very clearly displays the portrayal of institutions of marriage and family relations prevalent in India. There is hardly any kind of frank communication between husband and wife about their sexual life; it is taken as something immoral and sinful. Jaya always dreamt of love followed by physical relation in her marital life. But, their marriage resulted in a mechanical relationship and artificial love. It was like a complete disaster. She had completely lost her interest in the acts of sex which lacked love either before or after marriage. She barely enjoyed a conjugal relationship with her husband. She lacked the freedom of expression or sharing her desire with Mohan.

The institution of marriage also hinders the free communication between human beings which is clearly displayed in her relationship with Kamat, an elderly neighbour of Jaya who had motivated Jaya to come out of her shell. Actually Jaya felt more liberated with him as compared to her husband. There was no physical relation but only a spiritual one but as this kind of friendship is not acceptable in the society so at the time of his death Jaya fails to pay homage to her best friend due to the fear of putting her marriage into danger.

Shashi Deshpande further meticulously investigates the institution of marriage by giving instances from the lives of women belonging to the lower and middle class. The situation of women from lower class as portrayed by Deshpande is pathetic. Marriage for them is no better than a master slave relationship full of suffering. No doubt the position of women from the middle class is little better but it is too not devoid of sufferings. She has tried to display through the all marriages in the novel that marriage is a kind of tool used to suppress women. Woman is expected to possess the qualities of endurance, submissiveness, faithfulness but not self-assertion. According to her, a woman should not succumb to these roles completely and to some extent woman herself is accountable for this and should struggle to achieve her own identity. Jaya appears as an individual having her own identity, towards the



end of the story. She is successful in breaking her self-imposed jail house of mind and selects to survive in the family and at the same time is able to free herself from imprisoned slots assigned to her by the patriarchal society.

## FEMINISM

The novel comprises three visible phases of feminism. The first phase depicts the echoing of role models, like Sita, Savitri following their husbands subserviently and undergoing silent sufferings which Jaya refuses to follow as they are no more relevant in modern society. The legendary characters did all this willingly but Jaya is compelled and forced by the traditional and conventional society to follow her husband Mohan. In the preliminary days of her wedding, she desires to erect a shining home existing in fairy tales by slamming her apprehensions, vagueness and suspicions. For Jaya her husband is like a “sheltering tree”. In order to come out on the expectations of becoming a perfect wife and mother she represses her emotional and personal needs. Rather than sharing her emotions with her husband, she seems to be more worried with the outer glaze or shine, “Ours has been a delicately balanced relationship, so much so that we have even snipped off bits of ourselves to keep the scales on an even keel”. The comforting of her sentiments and feelings, and her concern to retain the exterior lustrous, successively produce a burden on her mind. She becomes restless because of her fear of her failure to uphold the typecast model of a perfect woman.

The crucial worry and knock of the novel is the second episode of feminism in the life of Jaya. In the very beginning she was silent in order to acknowledge the wishes and desires of her husband and to maintain the peace of her family. When due to allegations of corruption on Mohan she is compelled to shift at Dadar flat in Bombay, again she silently accompanies him. “She, like Gandhari of Mahabharatha, symbolically bandages her eyes and grows blind to his weakness. Like Sita, who followed her husband into exile, she follows Mohan into the concrete jungle – Bombay”. But when he tries to defend himself, “It was for you and the children that I did this, I wanted you to have a good life. I wanted the children to have all those things I never had”. It is for the first time in her entire married life that Jaya senses a powerful, queer feeling of anger at this unjustified allegation levelled by Mohan. The assertion additionally guides to further re-evaluation, self-inquisition of long seventeen years of her married life in the mind of Jaya. No doubt she is still silent but now she makes use of this silence in the



form of a weapon to rebel against the patriarchy. Now she inspects her existence with her husband Mohan and in this process she decides to transform in the future.

The last and third phase of feminism in the novel is the life of Jaya. The end of the novel hints at her future life. After remaining silent for long seventeen years, she is able to realize her strength and power which enables her to seek her own identity after breaking the chains of being only daughter, wife and mother. The novel concludes with her resolution to break her silence forever.

#### 4.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Explain that Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* depicts a paradigm of breakdown of communication.
2. Throw light on the male domination as depicted in the novel *That Long Silence*.
3. When do you feel for the first time that Jaya feels a strong emotion of anger?
4. When and how did the journey of self-awareness initiate in the life of Jaya?
5. How does the change of name affect the identity of the protagonist?
6. Reflect on the attitude of both Jaya and Mohan in the face of crisis?

#### 4.5 SUMMARY

This story depicts the life of the main character Jaya who as a young girl has always been inquisitive, intelligent and energetic which is entirely different from the conventional society. Her grandmother always advises that she has to behave in a more sophisticated and cultured way by becoming skilled in cooking, cleaning and other kind of household jobs. According to her she should be more adjusting and accommodating to maintain good relation with her in-laws after marriage where qualities of adaptation and agreement will play their part in her favour.

After her marriage with well settled Mohan, a family friend, they initiate the new episode of their life together. Shortly Mohan is transferred to Bombay and the young couple shifts to the city of Bombay. They adapt comfortably to the environment of the new city and with the passage of time are blessed with two children, a son named Rahul and a daughter named Rati. The whole life of Jaya's is committed



to her husband and her children and she discovers comfort and relief in taking their care. Nonetheless this happiness is short-lived since Mohan is found involved in the allegations of counterfeiting at his workplace.

An official inquiry is ordered against him and his friend and main accused Agarwal. Mohan and Jaya both are guided to leave their palatial accommodation in Church gate, Bombay to a small and dingy flat in Dadar leaving behind their children with their relatives. There Kusum, sister of Jaya visits and leaves negative impact on them. She has recently been separated from her husband and is in a grieving state. In the meantime, Mohan is dismissed from his job leading to financial crisis; at this moment he is badly in need of comforting words and love from Jaya but she finds it difficult to share his misery and doesn't know how to comfort him. This leads to a strained relationship between them and they both become distant from each other.

One day Jaya meets her brother Ravi in the market who makes unfavourable comments on the state of her husband. When Mohan comes to know about it he further develops bitterness towards his wife. A sort of estrangement grows between them and ultimately Mohan leaves Jaya and house. Jaya gets disturbed by the spirits of the past, strenuous childhood recollections, smashed aspirations as a Writer, discontentment in the bringing up of her kids, etc.

Solitary and gloomy Jaya recognizes her accountability in not supporting her husband when he was badly in need of her support and motivation and instead leaving him stranded in his tested time and to further worsen the situation, her son Rahul runs away from the house. She is supported and consoled by her neighbours as well as friends but she realizes that it is hard to discover her lost peace. She comprehends the 'long silence' which had crawled between the two has shattered the trust and communication between them. Moreover, she acknowledges the extended silence inside her which she had been ignoring since her childhood. Things take a different turn when Mohan sends a telegram stating he is returning and moreover inquiry against him is over and now the office is ready to take him back.

By the end of the story, after going through a phase of isolation, doubt and scuffle, Jaya is transformed into a new woman who feels confirmed not to allow this sort of 'long silence' come between the couple and within herself.



## 4.6 KEY WORDS

- **Acquiescence**-consent
- **Affronted**-offend
- **Configuration**- arrangement
- **Disconsolately**-unhappy
- **Endearing**-adorable
- **Endearing**-adorable
- **Exaggerated**- elaborated
- **Feckless**-useless
- **Frantic**-panicky
- **Frivolous**-shallow
- **Gleaming**-shining
- **Hostility**-bitterness
- **Harnessed**- saddled
- **Harnessed**-saddled
- **Ignominiously**- marked with shame
- **Incongruous**-inappropriate
- **Infinitesimal**-tiny
- **Jeopardy**-danger
- **Macabrely**-gruesome
- **Maniac**- insane
- **Monotony**- boredom



- **Nonchalantly**- in a relaxed manner
- **Reconciled**-accommodate
- **Ruthlessness**-lacking of compassion
- **Savagely**- violently
- **Squabbling**- quarrel
- **Trodden**-walk
- **Tarnished**- discoloured
- **Tenacity**- determination

#### 4.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

1. Elucidate the institution of marriage as portrayed in the novel with reference to the married life of Jaya and Mohan.
2. Explain in brief the thought of feminism depicted through the women characters in That Long Silence?
3. Trace the journey of a woman to self-discovery through the character of Jaya.
4. Are women themselves responsible for their own predicament? Explain with the help of novel That Long Silence.
5. Throw light on the first person narration and flash back technique used by Shashi Deshpande with reference to the novel That Long Silence.
6. Do you think that the novel That Long Silence bears resemblance to the life of Shashi Deshpande?
7. Discuss the aptness of the title That Long Silence.
8. While portraying the theme of silence, the author has tried to portray the predicament of women in general. Discuss.
9. Explain gender inequality as presented in the novel That Long Silence.



10. Discuss the relationship between Jaya and Kamat.
11. Why does Jaya consider silence as one of the tricks to maintain harmony in family life?
12. Explain the significance of the epigraph that refers to 'that long silence of one half of the world'.

## 4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. In the story, lack of communication plays a very significant part. It is silence which is prevalent in almost every relation. All the women in general depicted in the novel maintain silence in every kind of situation leading to lack of understanding and communication among the relations. Silence in this particular novel establishes not only the absence of communication but also the collapse of manifestation to indicate how Jaya gets disconnected from everything and is terrified about her career, about her writing. It has been observed that Mohan fails to realize her feelings and emotions and consequently she is split from within. Further, he is not an empathetic listener leading Jaya to feel isolated and distressed. There seems to be no significant relationship between them since due to his conventional attitude he always takes her as inferior and there is hardly any interchange of profound thoughts and wishes. Jaya, the main character, is so perplexed about everything happening and the activities around her that she embraces the silence as a means of communication. Because of this silence she fails to understand what to offer her husband in the times of crisis and even Mohan is not able to understand what he wants. Due to lack of communication, even their married life becomes a failure. Because of her silence towards the end, she recognizes herself as a failure in her role as a mother as well as wife. After a lot of self-analysis, she realizes that partly she herself is responsible for her present condition and resolves to break the silence in the future to lead a harmonious life.
2. Throughout the story male domination present in all the relations has been displayed very effectively. Since the very beginning of the story, Jaya has been told to learn to adapt and accommodate to become a perfect wife and daughter in-law in future. She is further told to stop asking many question so as to not to make life of her future husband uncomfortable. Even mothers prefer sons than daughters. Dilip, brother of Kusum is given more importance than her. Nyana after giving birth to four daughters is still hoping for a son. Women have to follow whatever is dictated by men either father, brother or husband. In the case of Jeeja, Nayna and Tara tolerating beating in



the hands of husbands is very common and women have to maintain silence after enduring it. Mother of Mohan is an epitome of sufferer in the hands of her husband. Jaya learns to maintain silence on all occasions. She follows Mohan silently without asking any question at Dadar flat. She wants to write but on the lines drawn by Mohan. Physical relations between man and woman are also male dominant. Mohan fails to understand feelings of Jaya when once she responds passionately then he withdraws him leading to her embarrassment and humiliation. She dresses herself to please him. In order to avoid annoyance on the part of Mohan she adopts the trick of silence. Besides evaluating her own life, she also analysis the lives of other women around her and found them victims of this patriarchal society. They all lacked the courage to raise their voice against this domination and rather lead a life like a slave. She recognizes that the main source of this problem is actually not the men folk but the patriarchy in the society, which stops women from establishing their identity. Therefore, she decides to break the silence and revolt the social norms which were already prevailing in the society.

3. From the very beginning of her marriage, she has learnt to be silent, to acknowledge the wishes and desires of her husband to maintain the harmony of her family. When she is compelled to shift to live in Dadar flat in Bombay as a result of Mohan's dishonest ways of making money, she silently follows him. But when he tries to justify himself, "It was for you and the children that I did this, I wanted you to have a good life. I wanted the children to have all those things I never had". It is perhaps for the first time in her marital life that Jaya feels a powerful and weird feeling of anger at this absurd and unjustified allegation levelled by Mohan. This allegation further results in more re-appraisal, self-probing of seventeen long years of their married life in the mind of Jaya. But at this juncture also now she remains silent but she makes use of this silence as a weapon to revolt against the system of patriarchy. Now she is further compelled to analyze her life with her husband Mohan and in this exercise of self-analysis, she vows to shed her silence to change in the future.
4. Mohan has been accused of dishonesty in his office and inquiry is initiated against him. In order to hide, he shifts from their luxurious flat at Church gate to dingy and small flat at Dadar. Just like on other occasions, Jaya follows him silently without raising any question. Their children are not with them as they have gone on a trip to South India along with their family friends. Here they get a break from their daily life routine and have ample leisure time. It is at this place during the



unbearable phase of waiting and emerging hysteria that the exercise of self-evaluation and self-denunciation initiates for Jaya. She is overcome with the past memories of her life; before marriage, her childhood, her marriage with Mohan, the disappointments and despondency existing in her seventeen-years-old married life, her failures on an individualistic front, all these things together start haunting and torturing her. Through her voyage into the past, Jaya obtains direction for her future. Towards the end of the novel, there is a real transformation in Jaya. She can't be just a silent and passive partner of Mohan. The novel concludes with her determination to speak, to break her extensive silence.

5. Normally, an identity of a woman is explained in terms of her relationship with men as a mother, daughter and wife. She doesn't possess any individual identity. There is a practice to change the name of the girl after marriage according to the wishes of the in-laws. In *That Long Silence* this has been described by the writer, all through the story in the character of Jaya, who is known by two names: JAYA and SUHASINI. Jaya was the name given to her by her father before her marriage, when she was born which means victory, and Suhasini is the name given by her husband according to his own wishes after her marriage which means a "soft, smiling, placid, motherly woman". At first the change of name in itself is symbolic of two births of a woman, symbolic of two types of life which a woman has to live in a single life. Apart from this both names are also symbolic of the personality of Jaya. The previous name symbolizes rebellion and the latter silent acceptance. Her childhood dreams of changing the assigned state of women ensuing in attaining her goals is devastated by her surroundings, circumstances and above all the prevailing social system putting all sorts of restraints on her. She is completely incapable and impotent to do something to improve her condition. Finally, she attempted to modify herself according to the current situation. She yearns to be known as an ideal wife. She rebels in silence. Towards the end she is neither Jaya nor Suhasini, she is transformed to start a new life.
6. The calamity that they face has a different effect on both of them and their reaction is also different. Mohan starts feeling that Jaya who had been taking so much care of him has now become indifferent towards him. His whole life has been revolving around his office. Now as he has no office work, he is feeling upset and restless. Being a conventional person he is clear cut about his role in life. He is missing his colleagues. He feels perplexed and does not know what to do. He is



expecting his wife to share his anxiety, doubts and unhappiness and expects positive response from her in this crisis and seems to be in need of emotional support from her, whereas reaction of Jaya is very different. Her whole life has been revolving around the needs and desires of her husband, now as he doesn't need or want anything so she feels herself at loss. Ample leisure provides her with time to do self-analysis and she becomes aware of her current situation. Self-awareness leads her to decide to stop revolving around her husband silently and resolves to break her silence.

## 4.9 SUGGESTED READING

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<b>Study of Whole Content with Ease</b>	

## **STRUCTURE**

### **5.0 Learning Objectives**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

#### **5.2 Main Body of the Text:**

**Jane Eyre**

**A Room of One's Own**

**Myth and Reality in The Second Sex**

**Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism**

**That Long Silence**

#### **5.3 Further Main Body of the Text:**

**Jane Eyre**

**A Room of One's Own**

**Myth and Reality in The Second Sex**

**Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism**

**That Long Silence**

#### **5.4 Check Your Progress**

#### **5.5 Summary**

**5.6 Key Words****5.7 Self-Assessment Test****5.8 Answers to Check Your Progress****5.9 Suggested Reading****5.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- To provide the students with the summaries of the books prescribed
- To enable them to recollect and recapitulate the study material of the concerned books as given in previous units
- To prepare them to learn to write the answers of various questions by themselves by going through the study material
- To enable them to practice in learning how to answer the questions in precise manner

**5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In order to make it convenient for the students to understand all the attributes, features and elements of the novels clearly, relevant study material has been provided for the previous four units for comprehensive study of all the books prescribed. This chapter has been specifically designed for recapitulation and thorough revision of what has already been explained in previous chapters in order to prepare students for their written exams and also to hold good command over the subject. This unit has been loaded with relevant material in the form of summaries of all the concerned books, followed by specimen answers and along with practice questions to be answered by students. After thorough and detailed reading of the books prescribed, and proper understanding of the study material given in the previous chapters, students will be able to find the answers of questions based on the novels. This unit will further help them in focusing on their subject concerned in better way.

**5.1 MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT:**



## JANE EYRE

Jane Eyre, a novel, by Charlotte Bronte was first printed in 1847 as Jane Eyre: An Autobiography and Currer Bell (Bronte's pseudonym) was listed as the editor. The book was extensively appraised as a classic which granted new genuineness and truthfulness to the Victorian novel with its pragmatic portrait of the internal existence of a woman, marking her scuffle with her natural yearnings and social environment. When the novel commences, the main protagonist is a 10-year-old girl without parents. She happens to live with the family of her uncle; her mother as well as father had expired because of typhus. Except the governess, the family excludes Jane. Later on she is sent to a grim and remote Lowood Institution which was a charity school and where all the students were maltreated. "Lowood," as the name indicates, is actually one of the "low" points in the young life of Jane. In Spite of such adversity, she is able to collect sturdiness and confidence.

After some years as a student and then as a teacher at Lowood, Jane becomes courageous as well as brave enough to leave. She is able to get an employment as a governess at Thornfield Hall, where she happens to encounter her refined employer Edward Rochester who was a very rich and impulsive person. At Thornfield Jane takes care of young Adele who was the offspring of a French dancer who used to be mistress of Rochester and develops friendship with benevolent housekeeper Mrs. Alice Fairfax. Jane gets in love with Rochester; anyhow he is anticipated to get married to the haughty and socially eminent, Blanche Ingram. Rochester ultimately responds to Jane's emotions and offers to get married. But on the day of their wedding, Jane finds out that Rochester will not be able to officially marry her, since he already possesses a wife, Bertha Mason, who has become insane and is kept away in lock and key on the third floor due to her aggressive conduct and behavior; her existence now describes the odd noises which Jane used to hear in the mansion. Accepting that he was trapped into that marriage, Rochester perceives it justified in following his association with Jane. He begs her to accompany him in France, where they will be able to live as husband and wife in spite of the legal forbidding, but Jane rejects it on principle and runs away from Thornfield.

Later on Jane is met by some people who take care of her and whom she afterwards finds them to be her cousins. St. John, an ethical clergyman, is one of them. He offers her a position and shortly offers a marriage proposal and that she accompanies him to India as a missionary. Jane primarily accepts to



leave with him, but not as his life partner. However, St. John persuades her to review his recommendation, and a flickering Jane eventually pleads to Heaven to indicate to her what to do. Immediately, she listens to a mesmeric yell from Rochester. When Jane comes back to Thornfield she discovers that the estate was burnt, put on fire by Rochester's spouse, who jumped to death afterwards. Rochester, in his effort to rescue her, had lost his vision and blinded. After being reunited both Jane and Rochester get married. Rochester after some time gets back some of his vision, and later on the couple had a son.

### **A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN**

We are informed that in *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf has been given an invitation to give a lecture on the subject of Women and Fiction. She puts forward the theory that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction." Her essay is created as a somewhat fictionalized account of the contemplation that guided her to embrace this thesis. She attempts to dramatize that cognitive proceeding in the character of "non-existent narrator "call me Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please; it is not a matter of any importance." The narrator commences her examination at Oxbridge College, where she analyses the incompatible educational experiences available to both men and women and also added material differences in their lives. She subsequently spends a day in the British Library ensuing the scholarship on women. Shelves were full of writings by men, taking women as a subject, but she discovers anger as well as inquisitiveness in the men's scholarship. Rotating to history, she is able to get very little details about the day to day lives of women. Then she resolves to restore their existence with the help of her imagination.

The character of Judith Shakespeare has been created as an instance of the disastrous destiny which an extremely intelligent woman would have encountered under those conditions. By taking into account this sort of background, she appraises the attainment of the great women novelists of the nineteenth century and throws light on the significance of heritage to a prospective writer. A scrutiny of the contemporary plight of literature follows, organized by going through the reading of the first novel of one of the contemporaries of the narrator. Woolf concludes the essay with motivation to her women audience, to follow the tradition that has been so scarcely entrusted to them, and to expand the foundation for their own daughters.



## MYTH AND REALITY in THE SECOND SEX

In the Chapter Three of part three and volume one; Facts and Myths of the book, *The Second Sex* under the title *Myths and Realities* de Beauvoir reviews how the myths influence daily life. She explains the differentiation between steady myths, which presume that a specific idea is specified and promotes it onto different circumstances, and solid reality. In reality, women cannot be enclosed by a sole idea. This usually steers to a kind of aggravation and frustration for men who attempt to comprehend and recognize them. Since myths make an effort to abridge women in totality, under a solitary notion, it becomes entirely difficult for men to acknowledge it when women tend to shatter this mould in reality. Specifically, the relation between nature and women permits men to describe much of her agony and suffering as something natural and infeasible to change. Further more, the myth of feminine “mystery” in a way permits men to imagine that women are impossible to recognize and understand, rather than to stimulating him to come to terms with what he fails to understand. Actually de Beauvoir tends to point out that all people actually happen to be mysterious to one another.

de Beauvoir further describes that in reality women have learned the skill of being mysterious so as to shield themselves. Since men persecute them, they have learnt to be deceiving and concealing their actual emotions and feelings. de Beauvoir appreciates authors who tend to write about women without ambiguity and mystery which according to her does not make her creation less enthralling. She in general, tries to put forward the argument that getting free of these myths connected to women would not carry away from men’s experiences, but instead would like to justify these experiences in truth. Presently, men hold the belief that “real or this women ” are actually those who admit their role as the Other but for de Beauvoir this is in reality contrary to the truth. She commemorates a new inclination in which women who inhabit professional status are criticized. Probably, this indicates that new myths, more conducive to women’s liberation, will come about.

## AIN’T I A WOMAN: BLACK WOMEN AND FEMINISM

*Ain't I a Woman* is a significant and prompt book by well-known feminist scholar bell hooks. In it, she inspects the prolonged and pervasive consequences of racism and sexism on black women in America. This book proceeds beyond just investigating the history of how these affairs have intersected, but



dives into real-life discussions that demonstrate the complex intersectionality of race and gender. It's a sort of eye-opening glance at what it indicates to be both Black and female in the United States.

1981 contends for people of colour to embrace women's rights as a philosophy, and battle for their full consideration in all levels of the women's activist development. bell hooks explains that black female slaves bore the brunt of misogyny during slavery because they were both black and female. The female became the object of lust and a threat to male morale because of the cultural aversion to sexuality that was ingrained in American society. The objectives of racial government impelled the development of a social "real feminist cultural cult" (which continued into the 20th century) that glorified the white lady as the Spiritual companion for men. The black woman turns out to be the antithesis to the perfect women hood because she is a kind of a danger to racial and sexual colonialism. Consequently, black women are powerless against a wide range of sexual, mental, and actual maltreatment without any mode of safeguard from white or black society.

The sexist and racist stereotypes of black women that are perpetuated by hooks are another topic of discussion. These stereotypes, which essentially demonize survival, date back to Jim Crow. They are internalized in the collective psyche of American society. They are ingrained in American society's collective psyche. These generalizations are destructive to the point that they have prompted innumerable assaults against black women. She contends that dark patriotism looks to reproduce bigoted male centric society with people of colour at the highest point of the social order. The institution of black rights motion still works on a patriarchal replica that leaves black women marginalized. Hooks goes into great detail about white upper-class, women have taken over the feminist movement, making it more stigmatized and nurturing cultural divisions within it. She prompts black women that it is to their greatest advantage not to forsake the women's activist development or name. Instead, dedicated black feminists need to openly criticize and fight racism in the movement.

## **THAT LONG SILENCE**

This story depicts the life of the main character Jaya who as a young girl has always been inquisitive, intelligent and energetic and that is entirely different from the conventional society. Her grandmother always advises that she has to behave in a more sophisticated and cultured way by becoming skilled in cooking, cleaning and other kind of household jobs. According to her she should be more adjusting and



accommodating to maintain good relation with her in-laws after marriage where qualities of adaptation and agreement will play their part in her favour.

After her marriage with well settled Mohan, a family friend, they initiate the new episode of their life together. Shortly Mohan is transferred to Bombay and the young couple shifts to the city of Bombay. They adapt comfortably to the environment of the new city and with the passage of time are blessed with two children, a son named Rahul and a daughter named Rati. The whole life of Jaya's is committed to her husband and her children and she discovers comfort and relief in taking their care. Nonetheless this happiness is short-lived since Mohan is found involved in the allegations of counterfeiting at his workplace.

An official inquiry is ordered against him and his friend and main accused Agarwal. Mohan and Jaya both are guided to leave their palatial accommodation in Church gate, Bombay to a small and dingy flat in Dadar leaving behind their children with their relatives. There Kusum, sister of Jaya visits and leaves negative impact on them. She has recently been separated from her husband and is in a grieving state. In the meantime, Mohan is dismissed from his job leading to financial crisis; at this moment he is badly in need of comforting words and love from Jaya but she finds it difficult to share his misery and doesn't know how to comfort him. This leads to a strained relationship between them and they both become distant from each other.

One day Jaya meets her brother Ravi in the market who makes unfavourable comments on the state of her husband. When Mohan comes to know about it he further develops bitterness towards his wife. A sort of estrangement grows between them and ultimately Mohan leaves Jaya and house. Jaya gets disturbed by the spirits of the past, strenuous childhood recollections, smashed aspirations as a Writer, discontentment in the bringing up of her kids, etc. Solitary and gloomy Jaya recognizes her accountability in not supporting her husband when he was badly in need of her support and motivation and instead leaving him stranded in his tested time and to further worsen the situation, her son Rahul runs away from the house. She is supported and consoled by her neighbours as well as friends but she realizes that it is hard to discover her lost peace. She comprehends the 'long silence' which had crawled between the two has shattered the trust and communication between them. Moreover, she acknowledges the extended silence inside her which she had been ignoring since her



childhood. Things take a different turn when Mohan sends a telegram stating he is returning and moreover inquiry against him is over and now the office is ready to take him back.

By the end of the story, after going through a phase of isolation, doubt and scuffle, Jaya is transformed into a new woman who feels confirmed not to allow this sort of 'long silence' come between the couple and within herself.

### **5.3 FURTHER MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT:**

#### **JANE EYRE**

Jane Eyre is an orphan who lives with her aunt, Mrs. Reed, at Gateshead Hall. Mrs. Reed and her offspring treated Jane cruelly and considered her dependent. In order to punish her for fighting with her cousin that was not initiated by her. Mrs. Reed locked her in the red room where Jane's uncle, Mr. Reed, had passed away many years ago. His ghastly existence terrified Jane. Soon subsequently, Mrs. Reed sends Jane to Lowood Academy, a charity school run by the duplicitous, Mr. Brocklehurst. Lowood has dreadful circumstances and a severe work principle, though her benevolent supervisor, Maria Temple, steps in from time to time to accord the girls a break. At Lowood, Jane befriends classmate Helen Burns, who helps Jane become able to tolerate personal injustice and trust in a compassionate God. However, Helen fell ill and died. As typhus plagues the students of the school, new management takes over and improves conditions in Lowood. Jane thrives under the guidance of her caring new teachers and, after six years, herself became a teacher. Mrs. Temple gets married and leaves Lowood, and eighteen-year-old Jane applies for a job as an independent tutor. She is signed up to be the governess of a young Adele Varens. Adele is the ward of Mr. Rochester, the oldest Master, dark complexioned and the Commander of Thornfield Hall. While staying at Thornfield, Jane often hears bizarre laughter, and one-night Jane saves Mr. Rochester from a blaze in his bedroom. On another occasion Jane assists Mr. Rochester covertly bandage and sends away a man named Mr. Mason, who was hacked and gnawed on the third floor of the mansion. Rochester blames the eccentric maid, Grace Poole, but Jane remains skeptical.

Mr. Rochester fetches a group of English aristocrats to Thornfield, comprising the good-looking but scheming Blanche Ingram. She desires to get married to him, but Mr. Rochester refuses Blanche, as he



is getting extensively attracted towards simple but intelligent and straightforward Jane. Mr. Rochester soon proposes to marry Jane. Jane, who has also developed love for Rochester, agrees. Rochester rushes to prepare for the wedding but at the small ceremony, a lawyer from London walks in and announces that Mr. Rochester is already married to Bertha Mason from the West Indies. Her brother Mr. Mason seems to confirm this. Mr. Rochester hesitantly accepts this and takes everyone to the third floor, where Bertha is disclosed to be a maniac, and taken care of by Grace Poole. Rochester was stuck in the marriage and he begged Jane to get back with him anyway, but Jane dismisses to be his courtesan. After a nightmare that alerts her to run away from allurements, Jane sneaks out of Thornfield at daybreak.

Penniless in a strange part of England, Jane spends three harsh days begging, sleeping outside and almost starving. Ultimately she is welcomed into Moor House, the home of Mary, Diana, and St. John Rivers, a rigid local clergyman. John offers Jane a job in teaching at a rural school. Jane realizes that an uncle who she has never met has passed away and leaves her 20,000 pounds. This uncle turns out to be interrelated to the Rivers siblings, so Jane all of a sudden has a cousin. In her joy of getting a family, she distributed her fortune equally among them.

Saint John intends to go to India as a missionary, and he proposes to Jane to go with him and work for him. Jane senses familial attachment but no fondness for St. John. She expresses that she would go as the sister of St. John, but he won't agree to any terms. The strong personality of St. John approximately induces Jane to sacrifice herself and get married to him. But in her baffled hysterical state, Jane encounters a flash of telepathy: she listens to Rochester's voice calling her name. She instantly moves out to find Rochester. Jane discovers Thornfield Hall burned down by the fire. During the fire, Bertha jumped off the roof and died. Rochester was rescued by his servants, but the injuries left him blind and amputated an arm. Jane meets Rochester in the Ferndean, his woodland retreat, and promises to always take care of him. They get married, bring Adele back home from boarding school, and bear a son. Rochester finally redeems vision in his one eye.

## **A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN**

Virginia Woolf, while presenting a lecture on women and fiction, informs the listeners that she is not clear what the subject should be whether it should be what the women are like; fiction that is written by women, fiction which is actually written about women; or an amalgamation of all three. Instead, she



focuses on one point that a woman must have money and a room of her own if she wants to write fiction. She speaks that she will adopt a fictional storyteller. She calls Mary Beton as an alternate self to associate her thoughts on the lecture interwoven with her everyday life.

A week before, the narrator crosses a lawn at the fictional Oxbridge University, attempts to enter the library, and passes by the Chapel. She stops at every station and is made to remind that women are not authorized to do such things without men. She goes for lunch, where the food is admirable and the relaxed atmosphere allows for fun conversation. Back at Fernham, the women's college where she is putting up as a guest, she has an ordinary dinner. She then discusses with a friend of hers, Mary Seton, how men's colleges were sponsored by independent kings and affluent men, as well as how it was difficult to raise funds for the women's college. She and Seton criticize their mothers and their own womanhood for being so destitute and leaving their daughters so insufficient. Had they been individually prosperous, they could have launched scholarships and secured the same luxuries accessible to women. However, the narrator recognizes the hindrance they had to face. Entrepreneurship is averse to parenting and it's only been 48 years since women were even authorized to keep the money they obtained. The narrator considers the outcomes of wealth and poverty on the mind, about the affluence of men and the paucity of women, and also about the outcomes of tradition or lack of tradition on the writer.

In search of answers, the narrator inspects the British Museum in London. She discovers that there are endless books penned about women by men, while almost none are written about men by women. She chooses dozens of books to endeavour to find the explanation to why women are impoverished. Instead, she finds a variety of other themes and a range of men's conflicting views of women. A male professor writing about the inferiority of women makes her angry, and she realizes that she is enraged because the professor has written in annoyance. If he had drafted it dispassionately she would have given more consideration to his argument than to him. After her anger passes, she speculates why men are so furious if England is a patriarchal civilization where they have all the power and wealth. Perhaps possession of power creates anger out of apprehension that others will take it away. She argues that when men declare women's inferiority, they are actually asserting their own excellence. The narrator accredits that self-confidence, a specification for getting through life, is often achieved by seeing others as inferior in relation to oneself. Throughout history, women have been the model of inferiority in order



to enhance the superiority of men. The narrator is indebted for the legacy; her aunt has left for her. Before that, she had gotten dirty, odd jobs offered to women before 1918. Now she articulates that as nothing can take her money and her safety, she need not despise or subjugate herself to a man. Now she considers herself free to "think of things in themselves," she can evaluate art, for example, more objectively.

The narrator examines women in Elizabethan England, wondering why there had not been any female writers in this productive literary age. She conceives that there is a profound acquaintance between living surroundings and ingenious works. She goes through a history book, knowing that in those days, women had very few rights, and discovers no records about middle-class women. She speculates what would have happened if Shakespeare had an equitably talented sister named Judith. She describes the possible action in Shakespeare's life: studied in high school got married along with working in a theatre in London. However, her younger sister could not attend school and her family deterred her from pursuing an independent education. She got married contrary to her desire as a teenager and fled to London. The men in the theatre forbid her the opportunity to endeavour and master the trade. After getting pregnant by a man in the theater, she committed suicide.

The narrator admits that no woman of the time possessed such acumen, "For a genius like Shakespeare's is not born of labouring uneducated, servile people." However, some sort of brilliance must have survived among women of the time, as it exists in the working class, despite the fact it was never rendered into paper. The narrator argues that the hardship of writing, especially the apathy of the world to art, is all the more complicated for women, who are looked down upon by established men. She says that the artist's spirit should be as "incandescent" as Shakespeare's, without any hindrance. The narrator analyzes the poetry of considerable aristocratic Elizabethan women and discovers that anger against men and uncertainty affects their writing and averts genius from shining.

Numerous bourgeois female writers of the 18th century and beyond are greatly indebted to Behn's progress. The narrator fascinates why four distinct and famous novelists of the 19th century: George Eliot, Emily and Charlotte Brontë, and Jane Austen, all wrote novels. As middle-class women, they would have little privacy and are more inclined to write poetry or plays, jobs that need less concentration. The 19th-century middle-class woman, however, was qualified in the art of social observation, and fiction was a natural match for her talent.



The narrator puts forward the argument that conventionally male values and themes in fiction, such as war, are given more importance than female themes, such as drawing room personality studies. As a result, women writers were usually compelled to accustom their writing in response to the imminent assessment that their work has no value. Although they did it without anger, they diverged from their authentic vision, and their books were affected. The female novelists of the early 19th century also had no actual culture to work with; they even lacked a prose style worthy of women. The narrator further argues that fiction is the pattern of choice for these women because it is a comparatively new and versatile medium.

The narrator approaches a recently launched novel titled 'Life`s Adventure 'by Mary Carmichael. Considering Carmichael is a progeny of the female writers she has remarked on the narrator dissects her book. She perceives the prose form to be uneven, conceivably as a revolt against the "flowery" reputation of female writers'. She continues reading and comes across the plain phrase "Chloe liked Olivia." She thinks the idea of closeness between two women is revolutionary in literature because historically women have only been considered in literature in association with men. In the 19th century, women became more complex in fiction, but the narrator still conceives that the understanding of each gender of the opposite sex is very limited. The narrator admits that no matter how great women are in spirit, they have yet to make as much of a mark on the world as men. The narrator admits that Carmichael has a lot of work to do to document the lives of women, and that Carmichael should write without bearing anger against men. Moreover, as everyone has a blind spot in them, only women can sufficiently fill out the male portrait in literature. However, the narrator feels that Carmichael is "no more than a clever girl", even though she shows no signs of anger or fear. The narrator believes that in hundred years, with money and a room of his own, Carmichael will become a better writer.

The pleasant perception of a man and woman taking a taxi sparks an idea in the mind of the narrator: the mind consists of both male and female parts, and to be "complete satisfaction and happiness" both must live in consistency. The narrator blames both sexes for causing this gender self-perception. Woolf takes over the voice and responds to the narrator's two foreseen criticisms against the narrator. First, she says that she deliberately does not make an assumption on the corresponding merits of the two genders, especially as a writer, because she does not consider that such a judgement is feasible or desirable. Second, her audience gathered over there may believe that the narrator is too materialistic and that the



mind will be competent to conquer poverty and absence of privacy. She quotes a professor's argument that among the best poets of the last century; almost all were educated and wealthy. She reiterated that without materialistic things there can be no intellectual flexibility, and without intellectual freedom it is impossible to write good poetry. Women have been poor since the inception of time; of course, they have not been able to write good poetry. She also answers the question of why she emphasizes the importance of female writing. An avid reader, her extremely masculine writing in every genre has let her down lately. She encourages her audience to be themselves and "think of things in themselves". She is of the view that Judith Shakespeare lives in all women and if women are offered financial independence and given privacy in the near future, she will be reborn.

### **MYTH AND REALITY in THE SECOND SEX**

In this essay, it has been stated that myths take various distinctive structures. Propounding the woman is implying to the eventual, non-reciprocal other, who denies, opposed to experience, that she may be a couple or a subject in altered ways in real life. For instance, a patriarchal civilization that prioritizes heritage conservation still requires the existence of men and women who snatch products from their owners and disperse them.

However, the Muse, Mother Goddess and Beatrice can all be discovered in a woman, if she is stationed as a Praying Mantis, Mandrake, or Devil. However, to assert that a woman is made of flesh and this flesh is characterized by night and death, or to assume that she is the grandeur of the universe is to move away from earthly reality and walk away into a starless expanse.

There is no doubt that in some respects women are inexplicable, "mysterious like everyone" in the words of Maeterlinck. They are wrecked to be ignorant of the nature of a woman's sexual gratification, the hardship of menstruation, and the pain of childbirth because they cannot comprehend her strange experience through any sort of sympathy. The authenticity is that mystery is reciprocal. Every man's heart also consists of a presence that is closed to it and impenetrable to women. For women, this mystery is presented in its most disturbing form. She is reasoned by her actions; to say that a woman is enigmatic, is not to say that she is mute, but to say that her language is not understood. It is worth noting that the female acquaintance, collaborator or associate are short of mystery, however, if the subordinate is male, and a young man, for instance appears before an older, richer man or woman as an



indispensable object, he too is shrouded in mystery. He often protects his wife, or at least supports her. However, while women often find many advantages in doing business with men, a man can only be benefited from doing business with a woman if he loves her. Since a woman is barely able to hear her own heart, it is achievable to assess his amount of attachment to her by observing his general demeanour. The woman is kept on the circumference of the world; she cannot be considerably defined through this world, and her enigma conceals desolation and worthlessness.

But the profound fact is the feminine Mystery as presumed by mythological thought. The concept of woman is an extravagance, just as women do not essentially "understand" men; there is no male mystery. Through religions, customs, languages, stories, music and movies, even the lives of those most affected by palpable reality are conveyed by myths. Anyone can use legends to enhance their own modest experiences. For example, a man is fooled by the woman he loves, calling her a slut, another, captivated with his own strength, discovers that his mate is a praying mantis; and the Myth of the Woman replaces a legitimate relationship with an autonomous entity with the motionless pondering of an illusion. Dismissing myths and perceiving a human in a woman does not devalue a man's experience because that experience would not detract from its variety, richness or intensity if it assumed in its inter subjectivity, is not all melodramatic relationships between the sexes, and it is not to dismiss the meanings that feminine reality actually expose to men. Women today go through a painful separation due to the dishonest behaviour of men; they generally accept that women are peers and equals. It can be unsettling to regard women as both social creatures and sexual prey. There is a young fiancé who abandoned his fiancée in a recent series of Peynet painting series because he was seduced by the glamorous mayoress who was about to get married; the idea that a woman can take on "man's office" while still being desirable has long been the subject of more or less gross jokes.

### **AIN'T I A WOMAN: BLACK WOMEN AND FEMINISM**

Ain't I a Woman takes its name from 1851 speech by black women's rights activist Sojourner Truth. Although it has been named after a 19<sup>th</sup> century speech and got published in 1981, bell hooks' work is as pertinent today also as it was at that time. Hooks investigates how an amalgamation of racism and sexism all through history has left black women at the base of the social hierarchy. By



comprehending how black women became so oppressed, hooks brings forward theories on how to overcome this oppression.

We all are aware that no two people are alike. We are complex, multidimensional people with our own individual personalities. Unfortunately, this does not mean that gender stereotypes no longer exist. In fact, stereotypes against women have existed throughout history. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, white American men, who happened to see all women as sexual tempters came to see them as unadulterated, virtuous, and virginal beings. But that stereotype did not apply to black women, whom they still considered to be profligate. This approach can be traced back to the advent of white colonists from Europe. While constituting the social and political system in America, they established the infrastructure for racism and sexism.

Black women were outlined as sexually obscene seducers, while white women were seen as chaste. For white men, this fabricated discrimination justified the rape of black women. While black men were condemned to racism as well as exploitation. The fact that black women were sexually exploited, further conceived their experiences far more distressing and dehumanizing. Apart from being compelled to work in the fields with men, women were also employed as domestic servants, an another way to raise new slaves and victims of sexual invasion. This intimidation of sexual aggression was used to frighten black female slaves. Women who antagonized these sexual overtures by their masters and wardens were penalized, as a slave named Ann disclosed. Ann recalls the man who was remunerated to hit her and how he gave her a calico dress and earrings in exchange for her sexual surrender. Instead, she threw a bottle at him. Ann was convicted to prison and whipped every day. Luckily the man didn't die as a result of her assault otherwise she would have been tried and possibly condemned to death. Unfortunately, this severe treatment of black women and their sexual prejudices were not eliminated with the abolishment of slavery.

Black women realized that they had no chance to enhance their social status or resist oppression. Their position as slaves may have experienced a change but the conviction that black women were immoral and sexually obscene progressed to infiltrate the American psyche as historian and activist Rayford Logan detected in his research. Logan reviewed racist cartoons in Atlantic magazine in the 1890s. One article suggested that the "unchastity" of black women was due to their disrespect for sexual morality. It was not only Atlantic reporters who shared the perspective that black women invited



sexual assault from white men. It was a perspective shared by entire white society and influenced the way black women were treated. This is evident, for example, in the following story about a young black woman published in 1912. The woman was signed up as a cook for a white house, only to be detained by the husband. He came to challenge the white husband but was jailed and penalized when the white man called the police. The woman confronted her husband's accusations, saying that she had been raped. However, the judge said the court would never acknowledge the words of a black woman over the words of a white man. And it was not just stereotypes about promiscuous sex that caused harm to black women, there was also the myth of the black woman as a matriarchal figure, propagated and strengthened by white society. Due to their low social position, black women worked relentlessly at low-paid jobs to support their families. It was male social scientists who highlighted the role of black women in labour and housework, calling them matriarchal and head of the household.

The author states that this matriarchal logo has been put in use by racist scholars to convince black women themselves. Consequently, black women consider that they possess social and political power, economic security, reproductive rights, and political influence, which actually they do not possess. By acknowledging their matriarchal role, black women voluntarily admit their economic, sexist, and racist oppression, enduring being subdued to the white patriarchal system.

American settlers have a lot to answer. They popularized the concept of a patriarchal society, and the ruin is still recognized to this day. Patriarchy stipulates that men presume the role of provider and head of the household, a conception that black men and women were accountable to as much as white men and women. This division of roles on the basis of gender has been the origin of considerable strain between black men and women. He penned that black men could be in business and women could be teachers, but further continued that women should be primarily concerned with raising children.

Racism from white proprietors elevated tensions further. From the early 19th century to the mid-20th century, whites refused to hire black people for wage earning placements. This meant that black women had to perform the jobs of domestic servants to support their families.

Under the white patriarchal framework, white men were considered to be the breadwinners of the family. For this reason, black women also contemplated the black men to liberate them from their



manual work. They would establish stress on their men to be more mobile. Such pressure also arose from the black writer Gail Stokes.

In her 1968 article on black relations, Stokes conveyed her disdain for black men who did not welcome the role of breadwinner. She then announces jealousy to the maids, nannies, and cooks that white husbands would provide for their wives. No wonder black men felt helpless. However, in their efforts to attain their potential, black men concluded up demeaning and controlling black women. Since the racial hierarchy in the patriarchy had long disowned blacks the right to status and power, most of them had to do mundane jobs with little money. Although black men failed to attain their existence through work, they could affirm their virility through violence against women. So, black men acknowledge the conventionally white male sexual exploitation of black women.

As far as the meaning of the word “woman” is concerned it defines all human women. But according to the Women's Rights Movement's interpretation of "woman" did not comprise of all women. At the beginning of the movement, white women feared that black women, whom they considered immoral and unchaste, would intimidate their own social status. Take into account white female federal government workers. In the early 1900s, they endorsed apartheid in workrooms, toilets, and bathrooms. The Women's Rights Movement even made use of racist passion to promote their own movement for the right to vote. If any evolution is to be made in bringing down the white patriarchal social system, it is very much significant for black and white women to come together.

The women's liberation movement that originated in the late 1960s scuffled to achieve the equivalent authorization and endowment of white men. However, because white men are the holders of power, it is ultimately up to them to choose with whom they share that power. This means that there is considerable clash between black and white women to be the "chosen" female group. According to the author, white patriarchy indented "moral" white women against "immoral" black women to confirm that both groups continue to be subservient to white men in the American power framework. American feminists must recognize that their environment is constitutionally racist. For a rewarding revolution for women, white feminists must break this foundation and endeavour to eliminate any myths, stereotypes, or divisive forces among women.



Black women had to fight consistently on various fronts and it appeared that whatever battle they decided on to fight, they had to compromise. The same thing happened in the course of the Women's Rights Movement of the 19th and 20th centuries. No doubt, women's suffrage is being celebrated as a grand victory, but we should keep it in mind that black women were not benefited as much as white women. In the beginning, there was hope. Anna Cooper, a 19th-century black women's rights advocate, believed that women's suffrage would allow an approach to higher education and the ability to earn a living without getting married. But even after the Women's Suffrage Amendment was passed in 1920, there was little change in the social status of black women. In the South, black women who attempted to make use of their hard-earned ballots were rejected by white election officials and warned with violence.

Actually women's suffrage led to inflation in oppression against blacks, as white women used their hard-earned votes to support policies of apartheid, racism, empire and patriarchy of their husbands, fathers and brothers. Additionally, black women have even greater combat to fight and the battle for women's rights occupied the back seat to protesting the rise in the apartheid regime. The rise of this discrimination exposed the blacks to the stripping of the rights, enjoyed by blacks during the Reconstruction period after the Civil War. They had to face an extension of the Jim Crow law elimination from unions and federal jobs, such as positions in the postal service.

So while white women were in favour of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1933, black women's activists were struggling against executing mobs and the condition of black poverty. From the 1940s to the 1960s, early black women who in the beginning struggled for gender equality acknowledged their efforts for racial equality. If black women thought that after winning black emancipation, they would be competent to return to defend women's rights, they were entirely wrong. No doubt, black emancipation was indeed attained, black women still failed to relish the freedoms which they had expected. American society was and still is oppressive, racist and sexist.

Even on their path to obtain black liberation, black women occupied a back seat to black men. Male leaders of the Civil Rights Movement; Martin Luther King Jr, A. Philip Randolph and Roy Wilkins, dominated black women like Rosa Parks, Daisy Bates and Fannie Lou Hamer.



Although black male leaders no more welcomed the racist myth of black matriarchs without resistance, they did acknowledge the patriarchal gender roles rooted and desired by white males and expected black women to become enduring and submissive. It was not alone the leaders of the movement who preserved the idea of the submissive woman during the 1950s; black women were also socialized to accept these gender roles through the mass media, such as McCall's magazine and Ladies Home Magazine. These publications sold makeup, clothing, and feminine ideals to black women who were initiating to access the middle class.

This persuasion of black women with the help of magazines and television wrought out so well that even decades later, these established ideals of femininity are still visible. In the 60s and 70s, many black women believed that black emancipation should be led by energetic black patriarchy. This assumption was obvious in Inez Smith Reid's 1972 book *Together Black Women*. In the book, black woman interviewees expressed their viewpoint that black men should accept an assertive role in the black rights movement. As one respondent said, "I think the woman should be behind the man." The same woman thought that black men should guide black liberation because "men represent the symbol of the races." The essence of equality movement has been observed to be collapsed. The black liberation movement was genetically sexist and the feminist movement was racist. The author puts forward the argument that feminism is confined within the white capitalist patriarchal structure. She describes genuine feminism as the unshackling of all people; men and women from dominance, oppression and sexist stereotypes. The only manner to achieve this, she said, is to entirely reconstruct American society.

The current structure encourages male barbarism. The cultivation of brutality against women will not be reversed by composing more sanctuaries for sufferers of domestic violence or by instructing women to fight for themselves against male sexual strike. Actually society should barricade edifying aggression and assault as a male archetypal. To support the predicament of all the destitute population, we must overthrow the independent, imperialist, racist and sexist oppression that determine society of America. One means to do this is to ensure that the feminist movement ceases performing within the boundaries of race and class. Members of women's rights organizations have not yet attempted to challenge the elimination with which the feminist movement was established. Without approving that some of the women are gender oppressed to a much greater extent than others, radical change is unlikely. The white



capitalist patriarchal system is culpable for the entire philosophy of sexism and racist oppression. White women and black men were supported to pursue power for themselves according to existing patriarchal rules, instead of uniting across races and genders to attain cumulative change and confront white male domination. This intended that black women strive to assert an articulation in both the women's movement and the black liberation movement.

The author advocates a feminist style that involves remodelling a new society. This will eliminate the "ideology of dominance" in Western culture and prearrange self-development of its people over monetary and material interests. For a long time, the feminist model has been established on faulty power architecture. It's time to tear down all the walls and build a whole new base to keep growing.

### **THAT LONG SILENCE**

Shashi Deshpande's novel, *That Long Silence* informs and tries to breach the long silence that surrounds women, their experiences, and their world. For an expanded time, women have survived as a void, as truancy in literature, whether Western or Indian. This is not only authentic about the fiction created by men but also by women, who mostly write love stories that deal with women's experiences superficially creating the same genre and stereotypes of women that they find very offensive in men's writings. Women writers also often fall prey to this normative feminist ideology that creates strong female characters. This doctrine became as repressive as the doctrine created by male political system and concealed the truth about most of their sisters and their lives.

In this context, Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* pledges to be a fresh start as compared to most of the novels written by women. Of course, we can't assert that she is attempting to do something extraordinary. We easily observe the character of the middle class and the people we meet in the novel. The contribution of the novelist lies in the intense awareness and fresh perspective she imports to well-known genres and situations. The commotion of the novel is prompted by a catastrophe in a middle-class family. The narrator's husband, Mohan has in this quest for credibility and assurance, embezzled several acts of misappropriation, as a consequence of which he is now facing an investigation and possibly may lose his job. Mohan is suggested by Agarwal, his accomplice to stay away from this office and apartment in Churchgate until the storm subsides. Fortunately for Mohan, the kids were travelling with their family friends, and it concludes well, they don't even require learning about the humiliation.



Therefore, Mohan chooses that he and his wife Jaya will stay at Dadar's apartment. This apartment used to belong to Jaya's maternal uncle. Jaya and Mohan had stayed there before moving to a larger apartment in Churchgate. Jaya agrees with her husband's decision and goes with him, admitting in silent annoyance, to their current life in a sort of banishment at Dadar's apartment. It is there, in duration of unbearable waiting and heightened hysteria that the course of self-reflection and self-criticism initiates for Jaya.

She is flushed with memories of her past life, her marriage to Mohan, the disappointments and frustrations in her seventeen-year married life, and individual inadequacy, all of which commence to haunt her and agitate her. Through travelling to the past, Jaya receives a sort of suggestion for her future. Towards the end of the novel, the catastrophe, a simple storm in a cup of tea, has been changed and everything seems to be the same except for what has happened to Jaya. Jaya can no longer be a yielding, silent companion with Mohan. The novel ends with her determination to speak up, to break her prolonged silence.

That Long Silence then follows Jaya's journey through countless uncertainties, concern, guilt, annoyance, suppression and silence for communication and submission. Even inadvertently reading the novel prepares one to realize that Shashi Deshpande isn't just writing about her female heroine, Jaya, who is trying to erase the lingering silence and battle with the issues that emerge; self-revelation and self-judgement, but through Jaya, also about other women, hapless victims who always fail to break their silence. First of all, the author points out that our culture usually maintains silence on the subject of women. For example, at one juncture in the novel, Jaya realizes that she doesn't appear in the genealogy that her uncle, Ramu kaka, has worked so hard to prepare and that he is very proud of. When Jaya asks her uncle why her name isn't there in the family tree she is made to understand that she is now related to her husband's family, not her father's. But that's only half of the reality. Both her mother and her female relations like his uncle's wives, even his grandmother, Ajji, that invulnerable woman, "Who single-handedly " kept the family together, has no place in the family tree. Jaya feels deeply disappointed to find that her name and survival as well as that of the other womenfolk in the family have been absolutely erased from the family history. Therefore, the novel in a way is a sort of Jaya's protest against the treatment meted out to gentle sex in our culture and her endeavour to give a different side of the history from the point of view of a female.



That Long Silence is a criticism of our social establishments like marriage and family and the way they suppress individual growth and self-expression. These foundations place individuals in slots such as husband, wife, brother, sister, daughter etc. and hinder free conversation between people. This is what crops up in Jaya's relationship with Kamat. Kamat is Jaya's upstairs neighbour in Dadar. He is a widower and his only son has moved abroad. He is an isolated man and has displayed great compassion and empathy for Jaya. In fact, Jaya while alongside him, felt more free and convenient than when she was with her husband. But in our society, this amiable closeness between a married woman and another man is always questioned and disapproved. That's probably why when Jaya found Kamat dead on the floor of his apartment during one of her visits to his house, she was frenzied and quietly left the place. This incident displays how marriage usually leads people into awkward and embarrassing situations. Jaya can't even halt and offer respect to her best friend after his death for the apprehension of destroying her marriage. Possibly she performs a great job as a wife but fails as a human.

Shashi Deshpande uses a first-person storytelling technique and features the central character, Jaya, telling her own story. Jaya cautions the readers from the beginning that she's not the heroine of her story, nor is she articulating her lonely self. It can be said that her interests are male-female relationships, marriage, and family life. But the novel seems to avoid the easy explanation of blaming the man alone. Both men and women are products of their cultures and victims of the establishment of marriage. For women, going beyond the images and roles that society assigns them is just as difficult as it is for men. For example, during her first when Jaya proposes that Mohan cook, Mohan feels very much delighted with the suggestion because he speculates that cooking is not a man's business. We later find out that Jaya is on the same page as her husband, as she confesses to Kamat that the spectacle of him cooking made her feel uncomfortable because she thought it wasn't manly. Like Mohan, she also places her children in the void and gets frustrated when they refuse to stay there and contribute their part in executing the myth of a contented and congenial family. It was only in the end, after her torment that Jaya realizes her mistake and frees herself and her children from the nooks and crannies she had put them in.

In her efforts to execute her role as wife and mother, Jaya failed to appreciate her own capability. Years ago, Jaya has been successful in her good start as a writer, writing a story that won a first prize and was featured in a magazine. But Mohan's reaction to the story was absolutely disappointing. He



imagined the story to be about their particular lives. He was disturbed and aggrieved that the people he knew would assume he was the kind of individual, the man who was depicted in the story. Undoubtedly, this episode left a profound impact on Jaya's soul and influenced her writing career. So it makes her think conveniently to make her husband a scapegoat for her defeat, but in the self-critical mood at Dadar's apartment, she refuses that apparent way out. She recalls that even after her encounter with Mohan, she perpetuated to write under a false name (as female writers often do under the patriarchy) but her stories were rejected. Something was missed, something was censored. According to Kamat, it was Jaya's antagonism, her forceful passions. Jaya tried to remind him of what she had learned from her husband during her first extraordinary altercation with him: women can't be angry, that anger makes women unwomanly. She also had provided the usual reasoning that women usually give, when they fail at anything that they don't have time for thoughtful work, because they are busy with housework. Kamat reprimanded her for this tendency. He pointed out that the real reason she failed was her fear.

Jaya was not in the frame of mind to receive such harsh criticism. She got into her hole. She continued her career as a wife and mother. Mohan suggested her to write light humorous writings in the newspapers, what they called "middles". Jaya then launched her weekly column "Seeta" through which she conquered the hearts of readers, editors and especially her husband. The novelist clarifies that not only is patriarchy silent on the subject of women, but that under patriarchy, women are also reluctant to speak the truth about their gender. When Jaya conclusively comes out of her hysterical turmoil, she resolves some issues with herself. During the two nights she has been all alone and to herself, so she attempts to write down on paper everything which she had suppressed in her silence for seventeen years. What she writes is obviously the novel we are reading. The novel is primarily bothered with women like Kusum, Mohan's mother, and countless other sufferers like them, scapegoats of patriarchy and their own reticence. That Long Silence summarizes in a few words the history and development of women over the four generations that Jaya has been familiar with and assures a better future for women.

In That Long Silence, Shashi Deshpande has depicted the paradox of a woman writer and a young housewife. As a writer, she wants to express her perspective and ideas to society, but she still maintains silence during the time that she delves into her past, grapples with her present, and tries to



relate to her future. She is an intellectual who does not see herself in her place in an exclusively male dominated society.

Although Jaya is educated and persuaded by modern western and other progressive thoughts, and is a writer herself, Jaya, still wishes to correlate herself to the images of Sita, Draupadi and other personalities and other ideal mythological personalities. She had consistently tried her best to maintain a balance between husband and wife. On Raveti's birthday, Jaya views that Mohan has more liking for his niece Raveti than his own daughter. But she doesn't say anything to Mohan because she just sees it as “writer’s imagination” and nothing more. She is still willing to follow her husband's will.

She has no identity of her own. Her name keeps on alternating with the desire of others. In *That Long Silence*, the writer presents it through the character Jaya, known by two names: JAYA and SUHASINI. Jaya, which means victory, is the name her father gave her at birth, and Suhasini, the name, she was given after her marriage, which means “soft, smiling, placid, motherly woman.” Both names embody her personality traits. The first represents rebellion and the second represents submission. Her childhood dreams to change the circumstances attributed to women in order to achieve her goals, is collapsed by the surroundings, the encompassing circumstances and above all by the society that sanctions all sorts of constraints on women. She is completely defenseless and cannot do anything to boost her situation. In the end, she managed to adapt to the mainstream. She longed to be called an ideal wife. She rebels in silence. Regarding the physical contact between husband and wife, it is still the case that the husband dominates and the wife suffers. Even if the wife is hurt by the husband, she stays quiet. Jaya is also in the similar frame. She lacks the courage to say "yes" when her husband inquires if she is hurt. She has to endure everything. All of this surely does not represent an innate and cordial relationship between two people, when we identify that one is incapable of expressing his true feelings to the other. Lying forlorn in the small house, her spirit adventures through the past and present and hence envelops her entire life. Sometimes the author uses Stream of Consciousness technique to outline the minds of the characters, thus making the story real and realistic.

In the Indian background, once a girl marries a man, be it love marriage or prearranged marriage, the husband will have thorough domination over her. Whether the husband is on the right track or the wrong way, she must also pursue his path blindly. Jaya's husband, Mohan always interprets things based on its impact on society. He quietly enjoys following social norms even when they are dynamic. The



accomplishment of Jaya's novel defining the relationship between men and women is treated against what society will think in the future. So he wants Jaya to conceive like him and advises her not to ponder topics that might jeopardize their marriage. Jaya, representing the classic Indian woman in the current situation, wishes to archetypal herself according to her husband's wishes. But all these masculine ideas are not her own but imposed on her by society in general and his father in particular. Her father made her assume that she was distinct from the others and as a result, she could not cope with her dorm mates and maintained aloofness from the other girls.

During her childhood, she was raised with love and affection without any burden. But after she got married, she changed automatically and her anger subsided. When after getting married she is about to leave her home, her father instructs her to be always nice to Mohan and she always attempts to pursue his advice. It also highlights the fact that she is closer to her father than to her mother. Even when, her mother rebukes her or asks her about going out and come home late, she complains to her father against her mother.

Social compliance has consistently been more imperative for women than it is for men. In general, a woman's existence tends to be determined by altering her preferences to suit the preferences of others, even if her higher intellect is discontented. At the inception of the novel, we notice that she endeavours to explain to her father why she doesn't listen to the songs playing on the radio, but eventually she ends up being silent, repressing her desires.

The novel is not a biography, excluding some sections that deal with the dissatisfaction of a failed writer. Shashi Deshpande introduced an Indian woman like her in India in the 80s, not as she should be. In order to make the story more evident and captivating, Deshpande has utilized first-person narrative to guard its integrity by letting the protagonist interpret her inner self and thus inscribing the psychological portrayal of a modern middle-class educated woman. Jaya is basically a modern woman rooted in tradition, whereas her husband, Mohan is a traditionalist rooted in customs. The difference between their outlooks is so great that they fail, time and again, to understand each other. Jaya is essentially a contemporary woman steeped in convention, while her husband, Mohan, is a conventionalist soaked in customs. The disparity between their views is so enormous that they fail to apprehend each other from time to time. The discrepancy in approach is the central reason why they couldn't understand each other and their married life became feeble and murky. It develops into more of an adjustment than a love



placed on social concern rather than reciprocal requirement of each other. The reasoning may be laying in their selection of life partner. For example, from the very inception, Mohan wished for a woman who was educated, cultured and never an adored one. He decided to marry Jaya when he found her speaking English fluently, looking a lot like a girl he had seen speak fluent English.

The title highlights the silence that the central character Jaya yearns to break and to discover her own self, the role of a wife and her authentic self. On another level, she investigates the roles of Sita, Gandhari and Maitreavee at still another level. It's a convent-educated modernized English-speaking woman, groping in the shadows of life. She is discontented with her role model in married life and her own misery over own acceptance though unknowingly, which acknowledges two different standards established for man and woman in society.

Shashi Deshpande exposes both Jaya and Mohan when they are facing crisis in their life. The effects of the catastrophe they face are disparate, and so are their reactions. It is not clearly spoken what would actually happen to the resourceful Mohan, but it is ambiguously specified that Mohan will be inclined to be fired for cheating. Mohan senses that Jaya, who once cared for him no longer cares about him as a result of the catastrophe in his life. His life revolves around office assignments and family. Now that he's out of his office job, he's grown disturbed. While waiting to hear from his co-worker, he grows agitated and haunted. He is a conventionalist and holds a clear concept of his role in his life. When it breaks he is bewildered and doesn't recognize what to do. Waiting makes him feel anxious. He hopes that his wife Jaya will not only share his fears, misfortunes and doubts, but also speak emphatically and aid him to overcome the catastrophe. Everything he did, he asserts, was done not only for his ambition to make a good living in high society, but for his wife and children. In fact, he wishes to bond emotionally with Jaya, in whom he pursues protection in this storm.

Jaya, on the other hand, responds and reacts in a different way. Her full life is driven around her husband's desires. Now when he doesn't desire anything, she is confused. Both of them are here in her Dadar's house, which for her is a sort of homecoming. Notably, this homecoming prompts her to reevaluate her life, investigate her inner self and her relationship with Mohan. Till now her life has been revolving around the life as well as activities of Mohan's life. But now she is no more interested to hang around with Mohan in silence anymore. Just as she has given up the newspaper's "Seeta" column, she wishes to give up her traditional wife figure.



## 5.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

### JANE EYRE

1. Trace the whole journey of Jane Eyre in the novel in brief.
2. Throw some light on spiritual and supernatural and religion as depicted in the story.
3. With reference to the characters of Jane and Rochester, write a brief note on the art of characterization in the novel.
4. How does Jane Eyre differ from the typical novel of the last century? Discuss.

### A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

1. Discuss in brief how you find the concept of 'Shakespeare's sister' contradictory?
2. Do you agree that the most controversial speculation of Woolf in this particular book is the possibility of an inherent politics in aesthetic form? Discuss.
3. What does seem to be the main argument by Woolf in A Room of One's Own?
4. Briefly analyze A Room of One's Own in your own words.

### MYTH AND REALITY

1. Explain in brief how in the introductory paragraph the myth of the woman has been explained?
2. Is it prejudiced to assimilate women with nature?
3. How certain myths have been more advantageous to the powerful than the myth of women?

### AIN'T I A WOMAN

1. What was the role of justice towards black women?
2. What do you think is the reason behind denouncing slavery by the white women?
3. What do you consider as one of the weak aspects of the book?
4. Discuss with reference to the views of hooks that turnout of black women in the feminist movement in the 1970s was very low.



## THAT LONG SILENCE

1. “If I were a man and cared to know the world I lived in, I almost think it would make me a shade uneasy—the weight of that long silence of one-half of the world.” Interpret the statement in the epigraph in your own words.
2. The author has tried to portray the inner psyche of the Indian women in this novel. Discuss.
3. How does the author make use of Sanskrit and Prakrit language to symbolize silence?
4. Why does Jaya feel that she has been rendered silent?
5. What is the role of Lohanagar in the lives of Jaya and Mohan?

## 5.5 SUMMARY

To conclude this unit, it can be observed that all the efforts have been put in, in order to generate this unit as a useful one for the students from the point of view of recapitulating and recollecting the different aspects of all the four books prescribed in the syllabus. The unit has been provided with various questions to help the students in preparing well for their exams. Students are further advised to take it important to go through the whole text thoroughly to comprehend the whole material properly which has been provided in this unit.

## 5.6 KEY WORDS

### JANE EYRE

- **Ascetic**- strict self-denial as a measure of personal and especially spiritual discipline
- **Augment**-to make greater, more numerous, larger, or more intense
- **Benefactress**- a woman who confers a benefit; especially: one that makes a gift
- **Bilious**- of or indicative of a peevish, ill-natured disposition
- **Capricious**- governed by impulsive and seemingly unmotivated notion or action
- **Consecration**- to make or declare sacred
- **Diffidence**- state of being hesitant in acting or speaking through
- **Emaciated**- abnormally thin or weak; especially because of illness or a lack of food



- **Fastidious**- very attentive to matters of cleanliness or detail
- **Gregarious**- fond of company, sociable
- **Ignominy**- deep personal humiliation and disgrace
- **Injudicious**- not judicious: indiscreet, unwise
- **Lamentable**- that is to be regretted
- **Meretricious**- tawdrily and falsely attractive
- **Parley**- to speak with another
- **Penurious**- marked or suffering from a cramping and oppressive lack of resources
- **Preternatural**- exceeding what is natural or regular
- **Precocious**- exhibiting mature qualities at an unusually early age
- **Quiescent**- marked by inactivity or repose: tranquilly at rest
- **Ravenous**- very eager or greedy for food, satisfaction, or gratification
- **Refectory**- a dining hall
- **Sagacity**- being keen in sense perception
- **Sanguine**- having temperament marked by sturdiness, high color, and cheerfulness
- **Talisman**- an object held to act as a charm to avert evil and bring good fortune
- **Trifle**- something of little value, substance, or importance
- **Usurious**- practicing usury: the lending of money at exorbitant interest rates
- **Veneration**- respect or awe inspired by the dignity, wisdom, or talent of a person

### A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

- **Akimbo**- bent outward with the joint away from the body
- **Caustic**- harsh or corrosive in tone
- **Conciliation**- the act of placating and overcoming distrust and animosity
- **Confidante**- a woman or girl to whom secrets can be entrusted
- **Dissipated**- unrestrained by convention or morality
- **Farrago**- a motley assortment of things



- **Fleeting**-lasting for a markedly brief time
- **Frivolous**-not serious in content, attitude, or behavior
- **Gaudy**-tastelessly showy
- **Gesticulation**-a deliberate and vigorous motion of the hands or body
- **Halcyon**-idyllically calm and peaceful; suggesting happy tranquility
- **Idiosyncrasy**-a behavioral attribute peculiar to an individual
- **Inscrutable**-difficult or impossible to understand
- **Imponderable**-difficult or impossible to evaluate with precise
- **Misogynist**-a misanthrope who dislikes women in particular
- **Noxious**-injurious to physical or mental health
- **Palpable**-capable of being perceived
- **Pedagogue**-someone who educates young people
- **Permeate**-spread or diffuse through
- **Pernicious**-exceedingly harmful
- **Plebeian**-of or associated with the great masses of people
- **Prelate**-a senior clergyman and dignitary
- **Prodigious**-great in size, force, extent, or degree
- **Sedulous**-marked by care and persistent effort
- **Sonorous**-full and loud and deep
- **Tribulation**-an annoying or frustrating or catastrophic event
- **Virility**-the trait of being manly
- **Voluble**-marked by a ready flow of speech



- **Wastrel**- someone who squanders resources or time

## MYTH AND REALITY

- **Alleviating**-reduce
- **Ambiguity**-vagueness
- **Ambivalence**-uncertainty
- **Archetypes**-a very typical example of a certain person or thing
- **Authentically**-genuinely
- **Autonomous** -having the freedom to govern itself or control its own affairs
- **Conceptualized**-conceived
- **Immutable**- rigid
- **Insinuate**-imply
- **Opulent**- luxurious
- **Patrimony**-property inherited from one's father or male ancestor
- **Sublimating**-redirecting
- **Transcendence**-superiority
- **Unleashed**-release

## AIN'T I A WOMAN

- **Abolitionist**- a person who favours the abolition of a practice or institution especially capital punishment or (formerly) slavery
- **Astounded**- amazed
- **Brutal**- cruel
- **Conscientious**- industrious



- **Contemptuously-** in a scornful way showing disdain
- **Dehumanization-** the process of depriving a person or group of positive human qualities
- **Delineated-** describe
- **Denouncement-** condemnation
- **Devaluation-** the reduction or underestimation of the worth or importance of something.
- **Discrimination-** prejudice
- **Endorsement-** approval
- **Engendered-** produce
- **Infernal-** hell
- **Lynchings-** executed
- **Momentum-** the quantity of motion of a moving body, measured as a product of its mass and velocity
- **Perpetuates-** preserve
- **Preferential-** privileged
- **Quadroon-** a person of one quarter Black ancestry
- **Recalcitrant-** uncooperative
- **Subjugation-** the action of bringing someone or something under domination or control
- **Substantial-** considerable
- **Transcended-** be or go beyond the range or limits of (a field of activity or conceptual sphere)

## THAT LONG SILENCE

- **Acquiescence-** consent
- **Configuration-** arrangement



- **Disconsolately**-unhappy
- **Endearing**-adorable
- **Exaggerated**- elaborated
- **Feckless**-useless
- **Gleaming**-shining
- **Hostility**-bitterness
- **Harnessed**-saddled
- **Ignominiously**- marked with shame
- **Maniac**- insane
- **Monotony**- boredom
- **Ruthlessness**-lacking of compassion
- **Squabbling**- quarrel
- **Trodden**-walk
- **Tenacity**- determination

## 5.7 SELF ASSESSMENT TEST

### JANE EYRE

1. Explain with examples the attitudes of Miss Temple and Helen Burns that put an effect on Jane's attitudes about life.
2. According to you, how significant Jane feels that physical beauty is? On the other hand she may be lacking attractive physical traits, then what are the other qualities that emerge as her strengths?
3. How is St. John's passion in conflict with his religious intentions?



4. Do you think that the way the novel comes to an end forces us to consider Jane as the first contemporary fictional heroine?
5. Jane Eyre voices her personal story in the novel. How significant is her point of view in the book? How the story would have been different if it had been voiced through a third person point of view.

### **A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN**

1. Woolf argues that the specific social realities, in which women live, create unique feminine values and attitudes. If that is a good thing or bad thing? Explain
2. How does Woolf treat the problem of the female body? What does she mean when she says at the end of Chapter 4 that "the book has somehow to be adapted to the body"?
3. What predictions does Woolf make for future women's writing? How do they look like from our current point of view?
4. Does Woolf think poetry is better than fiction? Explain.
5. According to Woolf, why didn't women in the Elizabethan era write poetry?

### **MYTH AND REALITY**

1. Throw some light on the patriarchal system as exhibited in the essay.
2. With Reference to Myth and Reality explain that woman is mysterious.
3. What a woman is as depicted in Myth and Reality?
4. "The women of today are not women at all" Explain.
5. What kind of new aesthetics has already been born about the physical appearance of women?
6. Define the term 'other' as mentioned in the essay in brief.

### **AIN'T AI A WOMAN**

1. What do you understand about the term triple oppression as exhibited in the book?
2. Do you trace some autobiographical elements in the book? Discuss



3. Do you agree that people were considered property in those days? Explain with reference to the essay.
4. The essay reveals that sexual predation of Black Women was viewed as normal. Do you agree?
5. Do you think that white women were also participants in the enslavement of black people? Discuss.

## THAT LONG SILENCE

1. How do the women characters portrayed in the novel have contributed to self-awareness of the protagonist Jaya?
2. Differentiate between Jaya before marriage and after marriage?
3. The novel deals with the theme of Quest for Identity. Discuss.
4. 'Husband is like a sheltering tree,' is what Jaya has been told since her childhood. Do you agree? Justify with reference to the character of Jaya.

## 5.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

### JANE EYRE

1. At the very beginning of the novel, the main character is a 10-year-old orphan girl who lives with the family of her uncle. Her parents are no more. Both of them died of typhus. Except for the nanny, the family boycotts Jane. She is then shifted to the austere Lowood institution, a philanthropy school, where she and other girls are given very bad treatment. "Lowood", as the name implies, was considered to be the "low" point in Jane's young life. However, in the face of such a calamity, she musters courage and boldness.

In initial adolescence, after considerable years as a student and then a teacher at Lowood, Jane gathers the strength to leave. She gets a job as a governess at Thornfield Hall, where she happens to meet her debonair and Byronic master, the affluent and bold Edward Rochester. In Thornfield, Jane takes care of young Adèle, the daughter of a French dancer, one of Rochester's mistresses, and is befriended with Mrs. Alice Fairfax. Jane happens to fall in love with Rochester, although he is presumed to marry the pretentious and socially outstanding Blanche Ingram. Rochester finally retaliates against Jane's feelings



and proposes. However, on the day of their wedding, Jane comes to know that Rochester is not eligible to legally marry her, as he previously has a wife, Bertha Mason, who has gone insane and is locked up on the third floor due to her behavior pertaining to violence. Now the cause of the bizarre noises which Jane hears in the mansion is revealed. Believing that he had been deceived in this marriage, Rochester senses that it makes sense to continue his relationship with Jane. He begs her to go with him to France, where they can live as husband and wife in spite of the prohibition of the law, but Jane doesn't agree on ethic and escapes from Thornfield

Jane is provided shelter by people whom she later identifies to be her cousins. One of them is Saint John, a conscientious missionary. He offers her a job and soon proposes to her for marriage asking her to join him as a missionary in India. Jane at the beginning agrees to go with him but not as his wife. However, St. John pressured her to reassess his proposal, and indecisive Jane eventually prays to God to guide her what to do. Just then, she hears a hypnotic call from Rochester. Jane comes back to Thornfield to discover the land burned, set ablaze by Rochester's wife, who then jumps to her death. Rochester, in an endeavour to salvage her, went blind. Reuniting, Jane and Rochester get married. Rochester later retrieves some of his sight and the couple is blessed with a son.

2. Religion as well as spirituality is major components in how the characters evolve in the novel. Jane is maturing in part because she is learning to pursue Christian lessons and confront temptation. Helen Burns made Jane known to the New Testament, a book that became Jane's moral guide throughout her life. As Jane matures her communication with God, Mr. Rochester also has to precise his ego, learn to pray, and develop into courteousness. Brontë attempts to describe various forms of religion: Hélène believes in salvation; Eliza Reed turns into a French Catholic nun; and St. John sermons a dingy Calvinist faith. The novel tries to drive in a nonaligned way. In Jane, Brontë it outlines a moral conviction that fails to deplete her particular personality. Jane respects herself and is at the same time religious also but she also practices her liberty to love and feel.

Brontë puts into use a variety of themes from gothic fiction to add climax and apprehension to Jane Eyre. But the novel is more than just a ghost story as Brontë also throws light on the reasons for supernatural practice. For example, Mr. Reed's ghost in the Red Room is a visualization of Jane's stressed mind, while Bertha is Thornfield's "demon". In Jane Eyre, the consequence of the supernatural is more important than the origin. The supernatural permits Brontë to delve into the souls of his



characters, notably Jane's inner terror. The novel's culminating supernatural juncture crops up when Jane and Rochester have a visionary relation. In the content, Jane makes it obvious that the contact is not supernatural to her. Actually she views this moment as an enigmatic metaphysical connection. Brontë considers their psychic abilities to be part of her conception of love and religion.

3. The depiction of two major characters throws a sufficient light on the art of characterization of the author. Two main characters, Jane and Rochester, have been portrayed with great effort. From one point of view, they are romantic, whereas from another point of view, they are not romantic at all. Jane has been depicted as an independent rebel and when it comes to love she is altogether out of the ordinary. However, the novelist informs us that Jane's is a characterization of a governess, living detached, simple, and poor. She has been depicted as a weird character to play the role of a heroine in such a famous and popular novel. By putting forward a typical governess, Jane Eyre, as the pivotal character in an exceptional tale of adoration and adversity, Ms. Brontë has evened the roles of all those novelists exhibiting their heroines: dazzling and attractive, but upon closer scrutiny, their characters appear to be frivolous and their thorough emotions are mild and hypocritical.

Mr. Rochester, the hero of the novel, is a study in contradictions. In reality he is the least courageous of the heroes whom we encounter in the great novels. As he is presented to us in the early chapters of the novel, he is not esteemed by any of the characters that the heroes of the traditional novel maintain. He does not have any exceptional toughness of body or mind. With a flavour of the devil in him, he is a mild impersonation of an exhausted Byronic character. Usually erratic, often unpredictable, he is sort of mysterious in both his speech and manners. He says. "When fate wronged me, I had not had the wisdom to remain cool. I turned desperate; then I degenerated" (Jane Eyre, chapter 14).

"But this incredible hero of the inaugural part of the novel appears at the end as a commendable character. The debauched Rochester develops into the redeemed Rochester, as we detect him blind, an invalid, gallantly facing a deplorable fate and covertly cultivating an undying love for Jane. It is therefore a major feature of Charlotte Brontë's art. She takes ordinary, conventional material and reshapes and reshapes it into a completely new and meaningful pattern.

4. Jane Eyre seems to be a very extraordinary and complicated novel. It can only be defined by making use of some complicated statements because the novel incorporates many paradoxical features



in its structure. We can illustrate this novel as romantic and authentic, traditional and experimental, stereotyped and anomalous, plain and complicated, all at the same time. One of the criteria for the excessive buoyancy of this strange romance is that Ms. Brontë's art incorporates many contrasting elements into one. It is actually a romantic novel in the sense as its basic theme is the power of love. It depicts the impact of amorous love between two people

This consideration can be carried over to the story of our novel. Jane Eyre's plot holds that overblown quality. Apart from this, there are implausible coincidences, enigmatic events, and reflection of supernatural life, such as the ghastly laughter, premonitions to be commonly found in romantic novels of the gothic type. But despite these romantic components, we detect that the novel is profoundly rooted in experiential reality. There appear to be some autobiographical elements and also the prudent picture of current life in it. It seems to have been presented in the form of an autobiography. Indeed, it was titled when it was published in 1847. as *Jane Eyre: An autobiography*:

It was edited by Currer Bell and the latter name was the pseudonym adopted by Charlotte Brontë. The story, narrated in first person, follows Jane Eyre's career from childhood to middle age. The events of the novel are especially detailed in terms of both time and space. The venues of the events are the central counties of England. And the action is said to have taken place in the 19th century. Furthermore, there is a strain of persistent moralising from the beginning till the end.

## **A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN**

1. A very obvious contradictory concept in *A Room of One's Own* is "Shakespeare's sister", a character who embodies the possibility that one day there will be a female writer equal to Shakespeare's status, who has become the embodiment to personify literature itself. "Judith Shakespeare" represents a silenced female writer or artist. But pursuing to imitate the pattern of independent masculine writing subjects may also be regarded as part of a traditional feminist agenda. On the other hand, Woolf appears to delay the appearance of Shakespeare's sister in commemoration of the collective literary attainment - 'I am talking of the common life which is the real life and not of the little separate lives which we live as individuals' (1929: 148–9). Shakespeare's sister is a sublime character who "lives in you and in me" (1929:148) and who will draw "her life from the lives of the unknown who were her forerunners' (1929: 149), but has yet to emerge. She may be the common writer of Woolf's "common



readers" (a term she borrowed from Samuel Johnson), but she has yet to "put on the body with which she has so often laid down" (1929: 149). *A Room of One's Own* culminates with this conflicting representation of individual accomplishment and collective endeavour

2. One of Woolf's most disputed suppositions in *A Room of One's Own* covers the probability of a fundamental politics in aesthetic structure, embellished by the hypothesis that literary syntax is gendered. *A Room of One's Own* culminates in the prophecy of a female poet equal or rival of Shakespeare: "Shakespeare's sister". But in preparing for its arrival together, female writers require to evolve an aesthetic form in various respects. By predicting that budding novelist Mary Carmichael "will be a poet" in a hundred years" (1929:123), Mary Beton appears to propose that prose must be investigated and exploited in particular ways by women writers before they can become poets. She also criticizes contemporary male writers, such as Mr. A, who is "protesting against the equality of the other sex by asserting his own superiority" (1929: 132). She observes this as a straightforward outcome of women's political campaigning for equality: 'The Suffrage campaign was no doubt to blame' (1929: 129). She mentions other political and aesthetic worries when commenting on the Italian fascists yearnings for a poet worthy of fascism: 'The Fascist poem, one may fear, will be a horrid little abortion such as one sees in a glass jar in the museum of some county town' (1929: 134). However, if the paramount patriarchy of fascism cannot generate poetry because it challenges maternal lineage, then Woolf declares that women are not able to write poetry until the historical standard of writing of women is discovered and recognized. Women writers of the 19th century struggled because they were not traditionally feminine: 'For we think back through our mothers if we are women' (1929: 99). 'As a result, they lacked the literary tools to express women's experiences. The dominant sentence in the early 19th century was 'a man's sentence . . . It was a sentence that was unsuited for women's use' (1929: 99–100).

3. The main argument of *A Room of One's Own*, bearing the title "Women and Fiction" in the early versions, is that " 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction' (1929: 4). Paradoxically, this is a materialist argument that appears to be very much different from Woolf's probable aversion for the "materialism" of the Edwardian novelists documented in her important essays on 'Modern Fiction' (1919; 1925) "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" . . . (1924). The chronicler of *A Room of One's Own* commence by recounting her experience while visiting an



Oxbridge college, where she was denied entrance to the library because of her gender, she juxtaposes in some specific way the magnificent luxuriousness of her lunch at a men's college with the moderation of her dinner at a more established women's college (Fernham). This description forms the basis for the book's chief, materialist, argument: 'intellectual freedom depends upon material things' (1929: 141). It may appear little bit problematic to classify middle-class women like her with working class, but in *A Room of One's Own* Woolf proposes that women must be acknowledged and appreciated as a different class altogether, identifying their predicament with the working classes because of their material poverty, even among the middle and upper classes

4. In her extremely influential review *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Virginia Woolf investigated the cultural, economic and educational incompetence in the patriarchal system that interferes with women from accomplishing their ingenious potential. With her fictional character Judith (Shakespeare's fictional sister), she exemplified that a woman possessing Shakespeare's abilities would have been forbidden the opportunities which Shakespeare being a male writer enjoyed. While investigating the careers and works of female authors such as Aphra Behn, Jane Austen, George Eliot, and the Brontë sisters, Woolf asserts that patriarchal education structure and reading practices constraint (or "interpellate," to use an Althusserian term) women to read from the viewpoint of men, and make them learn or assimilate even unconsciously the aesthetics and literary values produced or embraced by male authors and critics within the patriarchal system — wherein, these morals and ethics, despite being male centered are accepted and encouraged as universal. It is in this contentious work that Woolf proposed that language is gendered, thus unfolding the language debate, and contended that female author, possessing no other language at her disposal, is compelled to use sexist/masculine language. Woolf also recognized the requisite for a narrative mode to catch flowing and ambiguous, female encounters that disobey a sort of organization and rationality; and consequently she employs the use of stream of consciousness technique in her novels, chronicling the lives of Mrs. Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsay, etc. Inspired by the psychological theories of Carl Jung, Woolf also introduced the theory of the androgynous creative mind, which she romanticized through *Orlando*, in an endeavour to go beyond the involving the binary of male and female. She accepted that the best artists were invariably an amalgamation of male and female or "female-male" or "male-female".



## MYTH AND REALITY

1. There are different types of myth. This one, the myth of the woman, sublimates an enduring attitude of the human condition that of “division “of humanity into two individual classes is a static myth. It ventures in the domain of Platonic ideas; a phenomenon precisely experienced or develops a thought on the ground of experience; instead of reality, value, meaning, awareness. Factual law, it replaces a timeless, transcendental Idea. This idea is absolute because it goes beyond the given, it is blessed with infinite truth. Therefore, against the scattered, random and varied existence of real women, mythological thought opposes the Eternal Feminine. If the explanation given for this approach is countered by the attitude of flesh and blood women, it is the latter that are in the wrong: we are informed that Femininity is not a false existence, but that the women involved are not feminine. Opposite Empirical truth is powerless against myth. However, in a way, its origin lies in experience. Therefore, it is quite true that a woman is different from a man, and this difference is precisely recognized in craving, hug, love; but the actual relationship is a complementary relationship; As such, it creates a real drama. Through eroticism, love, friendship and their substitute, betrayal, hatred, antagonism the relation is a clash between conscious beings, each of whom desires to be crucial. it is the reciprocal acceptance of free organisms that confirm the freedom of others, it is an ambiguous conversion from animosity to cooperation. Posing as a woman is like creating the absolute other, without reciprocity, contradicting against all experience that she is a subject, a fellow human being.

2. The myth should not be confused with the recognition of significance; significance is inherent in the entity; it is exposed to the mind; through a living experience; while myth is a supernatural Idea free from mental control completely. When L' Age d'homme Michel Leiris explains his perceiving female organs, it explains us things: crucial and elaborates no legend. We wonder at the female body, disliking menstrual blood, from the ability to see a palpable reality. There is nothing mythical about the experience that reveals the erotic qualities of a woman's flesh; and. it can't be an excursion into myths if one tries to describe them by comparing them with flowers or pebbles. But to state that woman is Flesh, to declare that the flesh is Night and Death, or that it is the magnificence of the Universe, is to renounce worldly truth and fly away in an empty sky. For man is also flesh to woman; and woman is not just a carnal object; and the flesh is clothed has a special explanation for each person and in each experience. And also it is quite true that woman, like man, is an entity rooted in nature; She is more indentured to



the species than is the male, her beastly nature is more evident; but in her as in him, the given characteristics are assumed by the reality of existence, she also belongs to the human kingdom to assimilate her to Nature is purely to act from preconception.

3. There are certain myths which favour the ruling class more than the myth of women: it rationalizes all the prerogatives and even sanctions their abuse. Men are not required to be concerned with reducing women's pain and the burdens which are physiologically meant to be their destiny. Since these are actually "intended by Nature" and men utilize them as an excuse for intensifying the misery of women, such as by refusing to give a woman any right to sensual pleasure, by putting her into work like a burdened beast. Of all these myths, no one clings more strongly to the hearts of men than that of feminine "mystery." It carries various advantages. And first of all it concedes to a simple description of everything that seems inexplicable; the man who "doesn't understand" a woman is contented to counterfeit a dispassionate defiance for an abstract lack of mind; in place of acknowledging his insensitivity, he recognizes the existence of a "mystery" outside of him: a justification that, certainly, pleases both laziness and pride at once

A loving mind thereby avoids many disappointments: if the behaviour of the loved one is erratic, her comments are foolish, then the enigma a kind of mystery assists to justify it all. And eventually again, by virtue of this mystery, this negative relationship is maintained which appeared to be unbelievably more appropriate than positive possession; In the company of a living mystery man remains isolated - desolate with his dreams, his ambition, his anxiety, his love, his pride. This instinctive game which can go all the way from immorality to spiritual elation, is for many a more engaging experience than a genuine human relationship.

## **AIN'T I A WOMAN**

1. On page 26 of the book, we come across a story mentioned by the author where the author narrates a story of a girl named Ana who is a slave and her master employed a whipper to thrash her after she was not able to complete the task that she had been given. The whipper had in his mind some other schemes as he tried to rape her since he knew that the law would definitely take his side. She hit him with a bottle. When the case was put forward in the court and was judged, Ana was convicted to prison and floggings everyday whereas the man was set free. It is a very ironic since this is



not expected by the reader that Ana to be sent to prison though she herself was the victim of attempted rape. She harmed the man in order to save herself. So the role of justice is even very ambiguous since the man instead of being punished for his crimes was set free.

2. On page 27 of the book, we discover the truth revealed by the author about how white women were condemned. They did not denounce slavery because of having sympathy or compassion for the black but because they felt ashamed due to the immoral actions of white men. The white men had sexual relationships with black women and as a result bore children with them. The white women as a result denounced the slavery because of the feeling of shame and kind of guilt rather than of recognition of the human rights of black people who endured sufferings everyday due to racism. Actually on humanitarian grounds, it should have been denounced slavery since it is injurious to black people and they deserved to be free.

3. One aspect that seems to be poorly depicted is how the writer tells her story. It sometimes appears to the reader as if she was writing it for herself, or was expressing her own feelings. Many feel that she must have attempted to write out of emotions since she articulates in her own voice with passion while writing the book. Apart from this, there are numerous rhetorical questions and it also seems hard to segregate facts from emotions. While going through the book, the reader perceives as if the book was written out of anger. The author herself being an African American poses various questions about her work and it might appear as if she is predominantly conveying her anger at the whites. She also tends to make certain generalizations that may not be able to unite all factions involved. For instance, some of the generalizations comprise the belief that all white feminists are racists. The book seems to entirely talk about the life of white women or the history of black women in the United States, about discord between race and gender, and the oppression of black women, therefore sometimes the title appears confusing because it does not give the reader a clue on what to expect in the book.

4. While going through the book, one of the details that afflict the reader is the manner in which the writer conveys that the immense role played by white men is the basis behind racism within feminism. Additionally, she puts forward that the black power group was sexist while the feminist movement was racist; therefore, black women faced a difficult time in making choice between the two. Hooks urges that the feminist movement was an affair of the middle and upper class that failed



to convey the necessities of the poor and black women therefore resulting in racism, sexism, and classism. The writer suggests that this was the reason why the turnout of black women in the feminist movement in the 1970s was very low. She also refers to the matriarch myth whereby women have always been blamed for all troubles happening to black families: they are always called the matriarchs yet have been kept out of power resulting in being oppressed without mercy

## **THAT LONG SILENCE**

1. This statement made by Elizabeth Robin forms the epigraph of Shashi Deshpande's novel *That Long Silence*. It seems as if the title of the novel itself suggests the objectives of this gifted contemporary Indian writer to shatter the long silence that has encompassed women, their encounters and their world. For a long time, women have survived as a void, as entirely being absent in literature, whether it has been Western or Indian literature. This is actually a fact concerned not only with the fiction created by men but also with the fiction created by women, who usually find themselves busy in writing love stories that deal with the experience of women in a superficial way there by generating the same sort of typecast women which they discover so deplorable in the writings of men. Women writers have also usually succumbed to this dictatorial feminist doctrine of producing strong female characters. This ideology becomes as domineering as the doctrine created by male leadership and subdues the truth about most of their sisters and their lives.

2. Shashi Deshpande has been famous as an award-winning novelist and short story writer. Her novels reproduce extremely outstanding minds of female identity very meaningfully and appear to reveal the essential and classic themes of feminist literature. Her novels seem to be strongly embedded in India and she loves to describe Indian society. Female writers of British Indian literature have contributed significantly to the improvement of modern English Indian fiction. The weariness and complete monotony of the life of a woman enjoying a remarkably comfortable life is portrayed brilliantly. She makes an effort to investigate the inner psyche of modern women who find themselves the crossroads between tradition and modernity. She attempts to bring forward the lack of communication prevailing in the novel, prolonged silence existing between protagonist Jaya and her husband Mohan verbally as well as emotionally. There is hardly any communication between Jaya and Mohan, neither vocal nor piteous. The emblem of silence for her is withdrawal, a defensive means



that enables her to express herself more meticulously and pleasantly. Her enthusiastic yearning of adolescence is deformed into stern rules and rituals by tradition. Her husband, Mohan, was not an empathetic listener, which leaves Jaya feeling lonely and hopeless. It is manifested that emotional squashing is more devastating for marital contentment as Jaya is disturbed, furtive and oppressed in the novel and she vows to move ahead for the improvement and resolves to shun the silence forever. It also proposes honesty, transparency and comprehensibility and empathic listening between spouses for a healthy marriage.

3. Towards the conclusion of her introspective narrative Jaya recalls how in Sanskrit drama, women characters for being low in status were not allowed to speak in Sanskrit but in Prakrit. With this she also realizes that her interpretation of her own subjectivity had been mistaken. Throughout the whole narrative, Jaya seems to have been oppressed by the silence forced on her. Her own perception of herself as a reticent substance is now at the verge of modification. She observes that what had been thrust on her is actually not silence but a 'different' language: 'I have been speaking Prakrit myself.' [22] If she has throughout perceived herself as unheard, it is not the result of 'silence,' but because of muffled subjectivity. It is actually as a result of the patriarchal institution of communication, the 'normative' conversation, is at variation with her speech which is managed in a 'different' language. In that perception, with this awareness she sees her introspective narrative of her subjectivity as organized in the patriarchal discourse. If she has been expressing and speaking in Prakrit and has been depicted silent, it suggests that her language is 'unheard,' a language which was not only inarticulate but also 'unsounded' by the male communication. Now, presently if she herself perceived her life as silenced accordingly 'I will have to erase the silence between us' [23], it is so since she also had not realized the essence of her language. For the male communication within which her reflective narration perceives her life thus far, the expanse of 'Prakrit' signs is a black hole—they abate to exist in their very enunciation.

4. Jaya feels that she has been rendered silent because Mohan suggests that whatever she has done in her life has not 'meant' to designate her care for him. Mohan after so many years of married life, puts a blame on her of not taking care of anything except her own requirements and needs: 'He accused me of not caring about the children, of isolating myself from him and his concerns, even of some obscure revengeful feelings that were driving me to act this way.' [24] He even fails to recognize that the



sort of writing she is carrying out is actually a deception for her of what she has desired to write. At this juncture of crisis in their life, Jaya and Mohan are like complete strangers to each other; as if throughout these years they have completely failed to understand each other. For Jaya Mohan's accusation means that she had been a failure in her 'career' as a wife also. But Mohan in reality is not simply complaining about Jaya, His accusation actually refers to all women: 'It's not just you, it is all women.' [25]

This culminating communication that emerges before Mohan plods out on her and she leaves the house signifies a kind of misunderstanding that prevails between the two. It seems as if in spite of living together, Mohan has never tried to understand her. The reason behind it, Jaya is able to realize is that what exists between them is not silence and if it happens to be so then, it is not speechlessness; it is a burdened silence, or even roaring silence. Silence, in this novel, signifies not the lack of communication but the defeat of signs to manifest. Mohan is not able to understand Jaya or any woman since their sign structure does not hold any worth for him. Women use language, they record their voices, conveying signals into motion that have not yet been deciphered in the standard male establishment of communication. Women dwell in a language whose users do not figure out their language. Women live in a communication space composed by patriarchal language and that renders feminine enunciation insignificant. This is how Mohan “cannot” understand “all women” because in the patriarchal linguistic structures that constitute it, what women “say” still, so to speak, makes no sense.

5. The middle standard life of Jaya, the narrator, as well as Mohan, her husband, is embroiled in the narrative of progression and growth of the country as signified by the steel plant of Lohanagar. The symbolic steel plant is not only potent for Mohan and other people working there but it involves Jaya also to some extent as, it seems as if those days were filled with the distress of domesticity for her, 'Pregnancy, baby's wails and sleeplessness.' This in a way reflects Mohan as the male beneficiary of the meta-narrative of progression and Jaya as its female sufferer. Jaya is a victim in the sense for being a housewife not out of her choice but because her husband Mohan is not in favour of her to 'work' she suffers displacement from her home town Ambegaon, has to adapt herself to the 'drab houses, dusty roads'; she also has to manage with the consequences of Mohan's over work. Since his job at the plant was quite tiring to which he had no objection but while at home he needed to to have undisturbed sleep at night. In order to ensure undisturbed rest for him Jaya had to get up from her sleep every time the baby wailed and take the baby to the kitchen. Therefore, the steel plant at Lohanagar



bears distinct memories for both of them. For Mohan and his other colleagues working with him, it signified an occasion to contribute in a way to the progress of the country. The influence of his advantage on Jaya was the supplementary burden: of displacement, of sleeplessness combined with the role of a housewife as if in confinement Therefore instead of just enjoying the benefits of so called development Jaya being a female like the majority of other women have been shoved to the verge of the process of production

## 5.9 SUGGESTED READING

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