

**SILENCE AND ITS MANIFOLD CONNOTATIONS IN SELECTED SHORT STORIES OF
SHASHI DESHPANDE**

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Received: 08 Oct 2020

Accepted: 20 Oct 2020

Published: 31 Oct 2020

ABSTRACT

This essay aims at unearthing the myriad connotations of women's silence in selected short stories of Shashi Deshpande. Despite her refusal to identify herself as a feminist, Deshpande seeks to unravel the ways and the strategies that women often resort to in order to break free of the silence that patriarchy enjoins upon them. Speech is associated with power and silence with powerlessness within the binary epistemology of Western metaphysics. But recent theories have tried to dismantle this paradigm and have argued the empowering aspect of silence. Deshpande too uses a similar approach to investigate the ways in which women circumvent the power inflicting speech of patriarchy with a strategic silence.

KEYWORDS: *Silence, Speech, Patriarchy, Women*