

Bakhtinian Dialogic in Sashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*

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ABSTRACT

Sashi Deshpande's That Long Silence (1998) is a work in which a multitude of voices converge through giving the readers different, varied contradictory versions of truth as perceived by a plethora of characters. The whole process of self-representation or self-reflexivity of the writer Jaya which takes place throughout the novel foregrounds the fictionality of the work. Through this paper, we intend to explore this metafiction – a novel about fiction – as the writer (Jaya) comes in between the various voices and thus stressing the fact that this is just a construct. Though Jaya here attempts to create an autobiographical novel the fact that the writer's imagination would intrude every now and then cannot be overlooked. The novel here becomes a site for the dialogic interaction of multiple voices and modes of discourse. In this novel, the author introduces the readers to innumerable characters. Naturally all these characters indulge in diverse dialogic exchange throughout the novel. The author doesn't make any discrimination when it comes to the selection of characters from diverse social and economic conditions. We are introduced to various characters, all involved in an active dialogic exchange throughout the novel. According to Bakhtin (1981: 9), "The idea begins to live only when it enters into genuine dialogic relationships with other ideas". This particular idea or outlook remains hidden under a multitude of discourses.

Keywords: Bakhtinian dialogic, that long silence, metafiction, Sashi Deshpande