



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

English

TEHMINA DURRANI : BREAKING THE STEREOTYPICAL ANNOTATIONS

KEY WORDS: feminism, self-respect, feudal system, patriarchy and eastern society.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose studying this work is to find feminist approaches of the writer and her inner desire behind writing this tremendous and earth shaking autobiography in a country where apparently the environment seems moderate but the fact is that it is a conservative society and women are especially deprived in all perspective of social phenomena. This paper shows a tussle of identities and of reverence between two genders and a fringe distinction between powers and deteriorates in the novel OR actually an autobiography named *My Feudal Lord* by Tehmina Durrani. This paper also shows a psychological struggle of a woman who is very much liberal and moderate yet deprived by social ethical teaching and distinctive bounding that induce her to undergo all the way through. The novel is an autobiographical and studied in the light of feminist theory, it is also noted that each event and action is fictionalized in order to resist feudal system in Pakistani society.

PAPER

According to the English Oxford dictionary the word feminism is a term used for the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim, feminist are the person who supports this belief and took part in this struggle, the theory of feminism it also portrays psychological fight in its initiators and anti-feminists.

Feminist struggle or feminism movement is not deliberately rooted to 19th or 20th centuries but has deep rooted going all the way back to ancient Greece. In the middle ages, "Christine de pisan" had the courage to enter into a debate with dominate male critics of her day. In 1960, the world of American women was limited in almost every respect, from family life to the workplace. A woman was expected to follow one path: to marry in her early 20s, start a family quickly, and devote her life to homemaking. As one woman at the time put it, "The female doesn't really expect a lot from life. She's here as someone's keeper — her husband's or her children's."

Feminism is basically a movement that demands equal rights for women. It aims to identify women as creative and equal contributors of values. Some radical feminists, furthermore, think that the writing of women cannot be judged rightly by male critics and hence these women believe in gynocriticism. The feminist movement came further into the limelight because of modern Western writers like Virginia Woolf and Henrik Johan Ibsen. Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879) were of the first to develop a feminist consciousness.

The phenomenon of feminist theory traces back its origin in the history in ancient times. Feminism brings many things to philosophy including not only a variety of particular moral and political claims, but ways of asking and answering questions, constructive and critical dialogue with mainstream philosophical views and methods. Women in the present day society –wives, mothers and working women- are not ready, to accept an inferior position in the family and society . They are striving for the removal of all laws, regulations, conventions and customs that discriminate against them and deprive them in any way of their inherent right to the advantages, responsibilities and opportunities that society offers to any section of the population. However, they have realized that they don't form a society separate from men. There is only one society, and it is made of both women and man. As women they want to share the problems and anxieties of men, and join hands with them to remove social evils and obstacles to progress. Most of them, however, have not been able to achieve the respectable position in the society.

The feminist movement therefore can be enrolling as outcome and burst of that frustration that women marched forward in the struggle for liberation and a civilized place in the society. The awareness that they are unjustly discriminated against and their

inferior status against men has been deliberately constructed can be traced much earlier.

This phenomenon of the twentieth century is a crystallization of all forms of social-political and psychological awareness that patriarchal society with its various structures and organizations is essentially hostile to women's freedom and interested in keeping them subjugated in order to perpetuate the patriarchal power and authority.

"Feminist criticism examines the ways in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women." (Tyson 81)

It is not surprising that most of the 19th century female writers fore grounded woman as the subject of their novels, or expressed female experience in their literary rebellion against their deliberate marginalization both as women and as writers.

In the 19th century women writers usually invoked a centralized object of power although it contradicted their aim of creating a resistance discourse. The centralized object of power was the male authorial discourse. When women did begin to comment on the social system in fiction their outlook was essentially humanist. Leaving aside isolated statements on the position of their own sex, which occurs in the writings of all women, from Jane Austen to Mary Wollstonecraft, they tended to stand aside from and indeed, distrust political systems and solutions and view the problems they described in terms of human relations.

Pakistani fiction in English provides ample opportunities for feminist explorations regarding women living under patriarchy. These literary discussions cover a wide range of issues regarding the position of women in society at large, Women in Pakistan have been struggling to prove their worth as equally intelligent members of their society, capable of delivering and contributing to the development of the country. However, there is still a long way to go as feudal, tribal and political men insist on a degrading position for women in Pakistani society.

A feminist analysis of literature allows the reader to understand the role of the female figure within the society in which she is being described, along with the social changes around her. The representation of women through literature constitutes a significant contribution towards understanding the position of women in that society. In this regard, the Pakistani writings in general, and specifically in English, carry an important position.

The diversity that contributes to the image of Pakistani women has been addressed by Khawar Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed (1987) in their book *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*. Depending on her geographical location, a Pakistani woman

can find herself in a tribal, urban and rural environment. She can be a highly qualified and self-confident professional or a self-effacing peasant toiling alongside her men folk; she can lead a highly cloistered life...or she can be a central figure of authority in the limited circles of influential women. The Pakistani woman then is a myriad creature for whom a single image does not suffice. To talk of Pakistani women is in fact to talk of groups of women, of clusters of similarity in a disparate reality.

Historical and literary studies reveal that much has been done to make women noticeable and visible. The prominent works are Sheila Rowbotham's *Hidden from History* (1973); Ellen Moer's *Literary Women*; *The Great Writers* (1976); Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (1977). Feminist approach accentuated not only the differences but with also the hierarchy. Men, the more dominant than women, impose their own concepts and definitions on the masculine / feminine identities. Violence is not an easy act to define. Khizra in her study entitled *majority of the female's point of view women's position* was considered inferior to man (Khizra 1998). According to Shaheen's findings, physical violence exist in all strata of society and main targets are wives (Shaheen, 1991). It is stated that gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation including those resulting from cultural prejudice are incompatible with the dignity and worth of human person and must be eliminated.

Violence against woman starts from the day when the birth of female child is mourned by the family. For the past decade, rape and sexual assault have been increased in our society. Gender-based violence generally encompass physical, sexual or psychological suffering to women including threats and coercion. Gender based violence endives from women subordinate status in society and is often referred to as wife beating, battering and domestic violence. Pakistani women suffer from high rates of rape, sexual harassment and sexual assault by the feudal. Women are treated as property of men (Bari, 1996). Domestic setting is fraught with violence which exposes women to physical abuse, marital rape, burning to death, psychological torture, and deprivation of basic needs and threats of violence in their families. (News Letter, 1996). Gender based domestic violence against women is mostly committed due to social values that attribute low status of women and devalue their lives and activities. Wife beating is common but its frequency and intensity vary across different groups and communities. Around the world at least one woman in every three has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. It is said sexual harassment, physical violence, female infanticide or seriously injuring female family and community members with impunity (Carol Bellamy, 2000). The reasons for more violence are feudalism and male dominancy. It includes physical violence such as hits, kicks, slap, beating, burning and sexual violence, psychological violence and discrimination at any stage of life in community and society, dowry related violence, sexual harassment at work place etc. "Domestic violence which includes physical abuse, rape, acid throwing, burning and killing is wide spread by feudal lords in Pakistan". (HRCP, 2000) reported the worst victims were the poor or middle class women. Feudal Lords after fulfilling their lust of sex disappear from the scene, leaving their partners behind to bear the worth of cruelties of others. Shree while speaking about *My Feudal Lord* (1995), she argues, Khar is in fact the product of the feudal society where women are no more than just material articles and objects. (Shree, 2002). Sunday Times wrote about *My Feudal Lord*: Durani's story provides extra ordinary intuitions into the susceptible position of women caught in the intricate web of society. In Pakistan, women are victims of inhuman customs and discriminatory laws. The experience or threat of violence affects the lives of women everywhere, cutting across boundaries of wealth, race, and culture (Madadgaar Research, 2004). Mishra (2006) says about feminism, "The notion of being a woman should not be guided by the dictates of the patriarchal society". Elisha's thesis (2011) a hypothetical description of female moral liability: Emmanuel Levinas with Lucy Irigaray and Kristeva. The paper terminates that patriarchy launches the ideas of man's superiority and woman's

demotion on the basis of gender (Baseer, Alvi & Zafran)

MY FEUDAL LORD is an autobiography by Tehmina Durrani a woman of strong courage belongs to an elite class of Pakistani society and wife of a well known politician Mustafa Khar who belongs to The Reign of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and a landlord of Punjab and commonly known as Lion of Punjab (Sher-e-Punjab).

She started writing this book just after the few months of divorce. In this book, she talks about the social ethics of Pakistani marital life by citing her own marriage as an example. In her autobiography she has just burst out her inner conflict and psychological fight and she merely talks about so called dogmatic and ethical teachings of Pakistani society and had expose hypocrisy of ruling elite class in general and cruel nature of her husband specifically. The book or an autobiography contain a clash between two different forces, gender discriminations, ultra-mod westernized thinking of characters and conservative approach of a well recognized and well sounded educated feudal Mustafa Khar.

Before marrying Mustafa, Tehmina was also married but she leaves behind her husband 'innocent and simple guy' and marries Mustafa. But soon she realizes the hollowness and barrenness of this relationship. She states in the novel that "*I had no power, no rights, and no will of my own*". Throughout the novel, Tehmina has highlighted herself as an opposed woman, this is true and so she is. Durani has shown in an undaunted way that every woman has her identity and individuality. Her so-called roles are nothing but cultural constructs as being mother she supposed to be tender heart, as sister she is supposed to be caring enough, as daughter she needs to be an obedient and as wife she must be a loyal and remain sincere no matter what condition she may have to be indulged. She said, a woman has the power to challenge the whole patriarchy even at the cost of her closest relatives. The book gives good food for thought to its readers and how will they behave in similar circumstances.

The memoir is distributed into three parts known as: 1) Lion of Punjab. 2) Law of Jungle. 3) Lioness. All three parts visibly map the growth of Tehmina Durani from an Ordinary and insignificant aristocratic house wife to an emancipated, liberated woman who is fighting for equal rights.

The book also offers many strategies to build resistance and create awareness regarding women's plight. Durrani's work illustrates that in third world countries like Pakistan, women are taken as personal properties and possessions of men since men control every sphere of lives of women even their behavior and movements. Men have the right and full command to make decisions for women and women have to follow their decisions in family, tribe, community and society. We find that feudal lord Khar does not allow Durani even to talk to her own brother. Once, he grew very upset when she talked to her brother Asim on the phone. He shouted "Why did you speak to him for so long" he growled, "Is he your brother or your lover?"

Durani also affirms her commitment to feminism in these words in an interview, "Well I am a woman, so I naturally write from a feminine perspective. More than that, I am interested in reform. My work whether it's *My Feudal Lord* or *Blasphemy* narrated autobiography *Mirror to the Blind* is about issues that concern our people, about breaking of a silence from a part of the society that cannot speak out. I am not called bold because these are the issues one does not talk about, nor does one talk about one's life. I suppose my passion for reform is overwhelming.

And, I think, when anything overwhelms you that much you have a natural boldness because you step out of the realm of fear" (Online Interview). This suggests that Durani has an agency to confess and to protest. She becomes the mouth piece of the women of Pakistan. Therefore, it can be concluded that Durani becomes an important agent of change who boldly declares her invulnerable identity in these words, "Well Mustafa, now the world will soon know you only as Tehmina Durrani's ex-

husband". Throughout the textual analysis from various aspects I came to know that she has merely talk about almost each patriarchy issue of third world country and social status of women specifically and in return she has face a strong criticism of so called fundamentalist sort of people and she is been even degraded by her own family and mother for this courageous decision of writing this book.

Thus the study brought out the phenomenon of violence whether gender based violence is present in our society or not. Violence against women feeds off discrimination and serves to reinforce it. Women face physical or mental abuse throughout their lifecycle in male dominated society. In my personal views, the best way to fight against this aggression is for the battered to take place and for the society to hold up him or her. According to Durrani, women should raise voice against violence and mistreat by their husbands and Lords. She believes on the suggestion that is to instruct our populace not only in the transactions of the humanity, but that of our enormous religion Islam too. There is a powerful and vital requirement for mobilizing and sufficiently using all associated divisions of society for planning policy and plans. Varying social approaches regarding women in Pakistani society necessitates sustained legal and social efforts. Pakistan cannot become a modest, liberal, wealthy and a prosperous Muslim state without intensification civil society

A larger part of our world gives emphasize on the dominance of men and women are been deprived whether it's European society or any other developing country of third world, she is always suppressed by males and their rigid mentality. Almost every woman like Durani has to face criticism if she profoundly courage to write against man dominancy or patriarchy systemization. Intention behind the analysis of this book is to highlight issue of women's relegation to an incessant scrutiny, so that the condition of women can be upgraded.

Tehmina Durrani's novel reveals a male obsession and fascination with female body and sexuality. The sexual awakening, victimization and emotional suppression of female sexuality highlight how women's bodies are effectively controlled and exploited through cultural traditions and the manipulation of religious rules regarding the position of men and women in society. The female figure is thus thrown into an emotional battle to fulfill the male-oriented culturally constructed duties, guised as modesty and obedience, and an inner urge to rebel and pursue her own desire. Pakistani female fiction writers offer an exploration of this systematic oppression of Pakistani women that occurs regardless of their class, caste, region and language that brings them under the common sunshade of ill-treatment. One cannot plainly universalize women's oppression but have common characteristics structures of punishment, shame and honour codes regarding female.

The novel or an autobiography named *My Feudal Lord* does not reveal hidden life and of a politician merely but on part of being demoralized woman she fights for the women of the same suffering class and she has enlightened a very rustic life and issues of a common woman of Pakistan living in a feudal systemized environment. There so many areas in Pakistan where woman is think or supposed to be a maid to look after of her parents, brothers and when she got married than again she has to continue her job to husband, kids and other related people, a woman of Pakistan is being treated as a deprived creature or treated as an animal.

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