



RESEARCH PAPER

**Breaking the Silence: A Text Analysis of Daniyal Moenudeen's
Selected Three Short Stories**

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ABSTRACT

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Society formulates gender stereotypes after a constant practice. Male and female are given typical traditional roles according to previous practice. The result of these practices shows that women have always been assigned negative roles and they are projected negatively i.e. emotionally unstable, sexually weak and irrational etc. This paper aims to see these traditional roles and to challenge these roles to give salvation to the female sex by using the frame work of feminist and gender theorists. The text of "In other rooms, other wonders" by Daniyal Moenudeen is analyzed by using the text analysis and qualitative research technique in research to feminist and gender theories. The results of the present research show that the society is still practicing the traditional gender roles as it is evident by the social practices of the male and female characters. Women have been projected as others different from men. They are acting within a given premises given by male. They are trying to break the silence imposed by men on them.

Introduction

Male and female have to work according to their traditional roles assigned by the society. These roles are constant as they are in use since a long time. Analysis of history shows that male and female are projected by given perspective. Women are projected as emotionally weak and considered fool. These misconceptions about women are still in practice even today. They are not having basic rights. They are still considered others. They are victimized on the basis of their gender. Their miseries are not going to be ended rather they are increasing with each passing day. Feminists and gender theorists are emphasizing on the need to end the misfortunes of women and get liberated them to reinvent their identities. The present paper is the study of a Pakistani born expatriate, Daniyal Moenudeen's 'three short stories i.e. Nawabudeen Electrician, Saleema and The spoiled man. The aim of this paper is to evaluate these short stories on the basis of traditional women roles and to get liberated women.

Literature Review

Literature is the true representation of life and society. If someone wants to learn about a particular society, he/she may know it by going through the literature of that society. Literature tells us the prevalent trends of a society. Every person may think and may create stories. In stories, the characters that are presented either positively or negatively matter a lot. From these characters the process of generalization is completed. After the projection of these characters in the stories, one may interpret it and it is open for generalization forever. Certain characters are given certain qualities and so they represent certain prototypes. After this these characters are seen from a particular angle. The portrayal of man as brave, chivalric, strong, reasonable on the contrary as a female character as an emotional, irrational, submissive and weak, show that there are two types of human beings that are by birth different one.

All these things create gender discrimination in the minds of the people and perpetuate it forever and ever. In this regard, a large list of binary opposition comes which does not do justice with these two genders. The powerful representation is attached to male gender and powerless representation is associated with female gender. Feminist and gender theorists challenge these two fold oppositions and traditional gender roles in literature. Simon de Beauvoir, a feminist and gender theorist, in her book *"The Second Sex"* has talked about traditional gender roles and the representation of women in literature (Beauvoir, 1953). She says that woman has always been projected in history as a negative and other being. The concept of gender othering is perpetuated in the history as well. She says that it is painful to see, women have also given approval to their degradation unintentionally and they have accepted those traditional roles given by men. Jennifer Gove and Stuart Watt say that a stereotype is a magnified representation of a trait attached to a particular category. They are of the opinion that these stereotypes are actually partial in a negative or positive way (Gove & Watt, 2004).

In an article "Thinking About Gender", Kay Deaux and Mary E. Kite, tell that the ethnic stereotypes were used in social science but since last two decades gender stereotypes were also traced in literature (Kay Deaux & Kite, 1987). In the field of literature, gender biasness or other is common thing that may be traced. Stereotypes about men and women are built through the texts and after this these are practiced constantly and frequently. Hans Bertan says that literature about women present women as internally very weak, seductive, vulnerable (Bertens, 2012). D. Jill Savitt says that in literature women are provided many guide lines to adopt role models while the men are allowed to choose any role they desire. On the contrary, the female have to act and re-act with in limited atmosphere (Savitt, 2009).

More over Savitt says that if a female does not follow the norm and creates riot then she is considered adulterous. She says that a classic series of both novel "Dick and Jane" show that women are encouraged to become women to act as the

desires of constructed patterns and traditional gender roles. The women are expected to be something extra ordinary and when they try to imitate the men in hostility then they are damned for imitating the men and men are encouraged to become real men in the literature and in the real life. Savitt says that mostly the female are presented in literature very tightly showing that what male and female should be actually. Certain negative attributes such as sacrifice, timidity, obedience, inaptitude, anxiety and reliance are attached to women and such attributes as originality, ingenuity and valor are attached to male. She says that this kind of gender myths start in the early age of the children where in stories the girls are in trouble and the boys are there to rescue them. Similarly, Richard Allen in an article, "Literature, Gender, and Feminist Criticism" says that Charles Dickens in his novel "Great Expectations" also presented the gender myths ideology by showing sexual behavior of the hero Pip and the heroin Stella (Allen, 2005).

Simon de Beauvoir, in *The Second Sex*, says that the female perform those roles that are given to them by men. Similarly, Savitt says that gender traditional roles are propagated repeatedly intentionally and they are being accepted without raising questions on the validity of those questions. Now this basic question arises whether these gender traditional roles can be tested or not. V. Geetha says that our own community is responsible to propagate these gender myths and it will have to shake this idea also by presenting a positive image of female in media and revisiting the text books to enable the female to perform positive roles and eliminate gender biasness, by telling men the limitations of their manliness and making it compulsory to force the Government to allocate a quota in the jobs even in legislative bodies (Geetha, 2002). Masculine and feminine traditions are socially based not natural one. The male always have an open choice to act and to enjoy whatever he wants while a female does not enjoy this kind of concession. So all these kinds of things push the female to backward and so they are unable to lead. Tina chanter says that women do not have as much educational and political facilities as the men have. If they are given the same, they would definitely be as good as men (Chanter, 2006).

Material and Methods

The qualitative method of research is used to get analyzed the text of "In Other Rooms, Other Wonders". Feminist approach and gender theory are the theoretical background of this research. These theories have also helped us to get analyzed these stories critically. Concerned examples are analyzed while using the frame work of these theorists, the critics and theorists.

Analysis of 'In Other Rooms, Other Wonders'

Daniyal Moenudeen is a Pakistani born short story writer. His debut collection of short stories came in 2009 that presented Pakistani society as a whole: rural society and urban society. All the eight stories in the collection revolve around a decaying landlord Mr. K.K.Harouni. These stories have raised issues on Marxism

and Feminism (Mac Kinnon, 1997). In these stories, it is shown that Pakistani society is not going to be merciful on the women especial the women of rural areas. They are trapped by men and circumstances equally. Though they are trying to assert themselves but in the end they get frustrated. I have selected three stories from the collection i.e. Nawabudeen Electrician, Saleema, and Provide, provide. First of all, I will talk about the short story Nawabudeen Electrician. Savitt is of the opinion that men enjoy powerful responsibility and dictatorial place. Beauvoir also says that no one is born woman but becomes one (Savitt, 2009).

The worst of it is that women have accepted those roles given by men to them. They are considered somewhat other by men in patriarchal society. Nawabudeen in the story is the typical representation of a man who is somewhat biased and behaves like a set pattern given to him by the society. Nawabudeen works the job of an electrician on the tube wells of K.K.Harouni. Next it is told to us that he works all the day while his wife who is not even given a name just does nothing but reproduces children. She has produced nine girls and in the end one son also. Nawabudeen is biased man who just wants to have son though he still sleeps with a woman but considers a stigma for him not have a baby boy. When he gets a baby boy, he gets relaxed. Next it is told to us that to get them married successfully is an insoluble question to him. Here it is evident that he considers his daughters a liability whom he wants to get rid of very soon successfully.

On the other hand, his wife is not protesting on the very idea of having so many children and to have a baby boy. His patriarchal mentality is shown in this matter as he thinks the baby boy would be the real heir of Nawabudeen after him. "Hello, My love, my chicken piece". This is a typical line said by Nawabudeen for his unnamed wife who bore thirteen children for him but still don't have an identity. He is using sexist language to express his tender feelings. She tries to please him in every matter by imitating young girls of the village. She is mere a sexual object and a puppet in the hands of Nawabudeen, the sole earner of the family. Her only objective is just to please him in every way. Again gender roles are evident in: "Nawab ate first, then the girls, and finally his wife". So Nawab, as his name shows that he is a prince and independent in his decisions, got the superiority in the family.

No one can eat before him. In the end whatever remains, she, the poor woman, eats. She also sits at the end of bed and at his feet. Nawabudeen is perpetuating the traditional gender roles to his own daughters how to behave in the presence of a male in the later phase of their lives. As the story progresses, it is shown he is an active member of the society while his wife and his daughters are passive members of the society who remain in the house all the day long. When in the end, a bike snatcher snatches his bike, he begs like this, "I beg you, I've got little girls, thirteen little children". Again he is thinking about just his daughters as in the patriarchal society, it is hard for girls to survive respectfully without a guardian.

So the discussion on the story and the characters of Nawabudeen and his

unnamed wife show that whole society is working on the belief which we call as patriarchy where women are considered as another being and inferior as compared to men. The male and female are given traditional roles in the story as Nawab is volatile person while his wife is just machine to reproduce children and after that the female children would be in the custody of their husbands. So these evidences strengthen traditional gender roles. Even she does not have her identity. She resembles to manly qualities. By tradition, social standards have propagated particular gender roles for male and female. Male is usually been considered as governing, masculine, and autonomous, whereas female is often projected as frail, sensitive and reliant. Basow A susan, (1986) expresses the same opinion about the traditional gender roles (Basow, 1986). The critic is of the opinion that masculinity and femininity create two worlds in the minds of the readers. These words tell two opposite kind of behavior. Sofer, Dalia. "Sex and other Social Devices" in her article reviewing Daniyal Moenudeen's short stories published in 2009 says that in Pakistan women are forced in their social life to adopt a typical role and work in a limited sphere of life (Sofer, 2009).

Mac Kinnon, C. (1997). in *Feminism, Marxism, method, and the state: An agenda for theory* says that the very name of male and female show erotization in the minds of people in the side the society and show the dominance and the submission (Mac Kinnon, 1997).

Beauvoir says that man is the subject, he is the unconditioned-she is the second of the two. In addition, Beauvoir says that human life is an unclear interaction between preference and immanence, yet male has been honored with expressing preference through plan. On the contrary female has been forced into the cyclic and monotonous life of immanence. In the story Saleema is considered other from the male servants of the house that belonged to K.K.Hourini. In the story it is told that her mother has to bed with the men to gain for worldly things. When she was fourteen, the son of the land owner violated her for the first time. She gets married and her husband takes her to the city where he works as a peon in an office. Soon he loses his job and becomes reliant on his wife who works in the house of K.K.Hourini in Lahore. In the house, Hassan, a cook, violates her. When her husband talks about the illicit affair "he opens his mouth she made to slap him and pushed him out of the room". (30)

Geetha says that gender roles can be confronted and male can act not as authoritative and self-governing. The women may also deviate from their traditional roles (Geetha, 2002). Saleema is the true representation of this deviation. She does not bother the defiant behavior of her husband when he gets to know about her affair. On the other hand, she gives him money daily. He begs her hungrily for money to satisfy his addiction. Though she makes *chapattis* but she is confident to face everything which she may confront. De Beauvoir says that there are a lot of reasons why female may not oppose their title of other: want of assets, intimate relationships with men, and professed reward in being other.

Saleema works in the house but does not rebuke the male servants who always make fun of her using sexist language. In the start, she bears all these things but later, she develops a resentment against them saying as "Go to hell". This response clearly shows that she has revolted against the set pattern of the society. Men always want to show their supremacy over the women whom they consider as another being. Saleema says that she knows them, they regard her slut. She is of the opinion that she wants to earn for her family. She got a mind to think about everything. She wants her own identity. She feels insecure among so many servants. She wants protection and security. She does not want to live a filthy life all the time. So she gets attached to Rafik who makes her pregnant. The entire house knows that she is having affair with Rafik. She deserts her husband by breaking the patterns of the society and lives with Rafik. When Rafik's wife comes to the city, she has to get separated herself. But she always thinks about her child and regards Rafik a lot. But the society does not do well with her and her child. She has to beg from the people. She tries to shake the shackles of the established patterns of the society but she does not succeed. In this story we see that her own child is begging though Rafik helps her monthly secretly but he is not willing to confront the society by saying that that child belongs to him and he has to feed and support him because of the societal problems. In *Other Rooms, Other Wonders* by Daniyal Mueenuddin is the reflection of male dominance society where a woman is always seen as a sexual object and nothing else. Shazia Sadaf (2014) in her article Daniyal Mueenuddin's dying men says that this debut collection is an ominous reflection of Pakistani masculinity in a metamorphosed state (Sadaf, 2014).

Saleema though being only female revolts and comes to live with Rafik in spite of the criticism raised by male gender of that house. But Rafik was not of that type of character who might challenge the set norms and deviate them. So he promises the "little girl" (32) to support her and her child secretly. He is Rafik (Urdu synonym friend) but in the true sense of the word he is not. She is Saleema (Urdu synonym reasonable) in the true sense of the word she is reasonable. She loved Rafik till the end of the story as Rafik was the person who understood her in spite of the fact that he had also seen her traditionally i.e. a symbol of sex. Stankiewicz, J. M., & Rosselli, F. (2008). in their article view that women are considered sex object most of the time (Rosselli & Stankiewicz, 2008).

Another short story voices against traditional approach of the society regarding particular roles of male and female in the society. Shamaila Haleem (2014) talks about these gender segregated society in her article Challenging Gender Stereotypes: A Text Analysis of Qaisra Shehraz's Novel *the Holy Woman*. The novel is about a Sidhi woman who tries to break the gendered segregated obstacles of the society (Haleem, 2014). The name of the story is "Provide, provide" where a typical landlord's steward behaves like a typical person. When he is requested by his driver Mustafa to get his sister on job, he gives his consent half-heartedly. Mustafa complains against his brother in law's cruelties for not providing substance to his

sister. So keeping in view his harsh behavior, she revolts and leaves his house for ever. When she comes to work for Mr. Jaglani, she pays attention to her body and shows interest in his owner's personality. He is also attracted towards her. Ultimately they develop a physical relation. She shows self-objectification while living in the patriarchal society. Self-Objectification means the procedure by which a female comes to adopt and accepts the values that society shows. Sexual objectification means that a female is viewed as a sexual object for male sexual joys. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) say that those women who adopt self-objectification care for their bodies as they are expected in gendered society (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Kant (1797) says that objectification starts, once sexuality is used outside of a monogamous marriage because "Sexual love makes of the loved person an object of appetite; as soon as that appetite has been stilled, the person is cast aside as one casts away a lemon which has been sucked dry" (p. 163)(Kant, 2017). Same is observed when the female character of Zainab is cast away when Mr. Jaglani is diagnosed cancer. He visited Zainab when his disease was on peak just to see what was going on after his departure. Mr. Jagalani got her married for his sexual pleasure as he was getting bored from his first wife who was right an old lady. He made Zainab's husband divorce her when he was unwilling to divorce her. He begged mercy but Mr. Jagalani threatened him for not doing according to his own will. She works for the betterment for the house. When she does not have a child, she requests Jagalani to hand over his son's daughter. He takes the daughter and hands over her. Mr. Jagalani idols her physical beauty: "he admired her thick black hair, braided and oiled" (68). Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) say that self-objectification may direct not only to melancholy, but also to body humiliation and eating disorders (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Objectification of the female is inculcated through the ways of gender traditional roles. Cognitive approach says that a baby develops cognition about the gender roles through repetition of those roles imposed on him/her by that society. Female may seek reassurance successively from the society just to get guarantee that they are acceptable to the society. Zainab voices like this in the story like this, "if you dropped me they would call me a whore out loud as I walked down the street" (70). So she tries to please Mr. Jagalani from every possible way in return she does not want anything from him. She even leaves her husband forever. But in return, she gets just hatred from the first wife and children of Mr. Jagalani as the society does not appreciate the vulnerability of the women regarding second marriage. The society may allow a person to get second marriage but it does not give a proper place to a woman who gets married second time. When he was on death bed, he often thought about her as she would be lying with another person after his death. Zainab does not demand anything from him. In the end he even does not want to see her as he considers her responsible for his present condition.

Conclusion

The text analysis of three short stories show that female characters are

presented in a typical way and they are assigned very typical traditional roles where men are shown as powerful, masculine and independent and female as weak, frail and dependent. Women are also the victim of self-objectification but in the society they are deprived of their basic rights. They are also challenging the traditional gender roles to the very extent though they are to some extent successful. In the story, Nawabudeen Electrician, the female that has no name has a manly manner and appearance. She says to her husband that she cannot be won by just giving raw sugar. She revolts but in her own way. In the story, Saleema, she revolts against the set patterns of the society and leaves her husband's house for ever. In the story, Provide, provide Zainab also challenges traditional gender roles by leaving her husband's house and getting married to rich Mr. Jagalani. In short, we may deduce that Danial Moeenudeen has presented the marginalized women in these short stories to expose the hypocrisy of the society and also has enabled women to challenge the established the norms of the society that always exploit women.

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