Representations of Women in Daniyal Mueenuddin’s *Saleema* and Qaisra Shahraz’s *Zamindar’s Wife*: A Feminist Stylistic Study

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Abstract

Gender stereotyping is an age old phenomenon used by patriarchal societies to maintain the hegemony of men over women. In this connection, literature serves as a powerful tool that the male society uses to promote sexism by representing woman as inferior Other of man. This research employs Mill’s feminist stylistic framework to determine how male and female authors differ in representations of women in their works. For this purpose, feminist stylistic analysis of Mueenuddin’s (2009) ‘Saleema’ and Shahraz’s (1998) ‘Zamindar’s Wife’ has been undertaken. Using qualitative method, the analysis has been done on the phrase/sentence level by adopting purposive sampling technique. The results indicate that sexism and gender bias against women dominate in Mueenuddin’s writing who has tried to maintain the male status quo unchallenged. In comparison, Shahraz has portrayed an unconventional and bold female character, yet her writing, too, is not totally free from gender stereotypes because escape from ‘internalized patriarchy’ is not easy. The study is significant as it validates and reinforces the previous studies that intervene on behalf of women by exposing and fighting the sexist attitude present against them in literary works. Future researchers can investigate the same data by analysing the text at the discourse level as proposed by Mills to further explore the issue.

**Key Words:** patriarchy, gender stereotyping, sexism, feminist stylistics

1. Introduction

Gender plays an important role in the lives of women and men whose clothing into two different colours — pink and blue — right at the moment of their births symbolises two different sets of attitudes that they are expected to adopt (Langue, 2008). “In a patriarchal society, this often
means that a male will lead a privileged life in which he is thought to be the standard for human experience and the female will lead a subjugated, subservient life in which she is defined only in relation to males” (Lange, 2008, p.2). Mills (1995) argues that the society in general works for the benefit of men while marginalizing women. This is done mainly through sexism and stereotyping and language is the most powerful tool for promoting gender bias. Kramarae & Treichler (1985) argue that sexist language is one of the most powerful means through which a patriarchal society presents and perpetuates its interpretations of the world, “including the view that women are inferior, passive, and, by definition, subordinate to males” (p. 412). Language serves as a reflection of sexist culture and carrier of patriarchal ideology that through constant and repeated enactment in discourse seems so familiar and natural that gender roles are adopted as if these roles represent truth, causing gender stereotypes to endure (Cameron, 1990).

Eagleton (1976) sees a deep relationship between literature and ideology arguing literature "is the most revealing mode of experiential access to ideology that we possess” (as cited in Darweesh & Ghayadh, 2016, p.22). Gender roles which are deeply rooted in language and which assign a weaker position to women are as hard to dispel from literature as from real life. Feminist literary criticism involves critical interventions in the ways sexism and gender bias against women are linguistically encoded by exploring the economic, social, political, and psychological forces embedded within texts. Feminist stylistics investigates the patriarchal ideology within texts by exploring the stylistic traits of the texts. The phonological, lexical, grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of texts are analysed that add up to the marginalization of women. The study of the male and female sentence is also one of the concerns of this field. It is one of those few branches of stylistics which link the textual traits to their discourse functions and contextual significance (Ufot, 2012). Lakoff (1973), Spender (1980) Simpson (1993) and
Mills (1995) are important figures in the area of feminist stylistics. However the label „feminist stylistics“ has been ascribed to Mills for she is the one who coined the term and delineated in detail the applications of this sub-branch (Darweesh & Ghayadh, 2016).

The present study analyses the representations of women in Mueenuddin’s (2009) „Saleema“ and Shahraz’s (1998) Zamindar’s wife. Mueenuddin and Shahraz are British Pakistani male and female writers respectively. Pakistani society is a patriarchal society where male writers freely use gender stereotypes and sexist language in their works (Ali & Gavino, 2008). They represent women as weak, fragile and passive, with beauty as their only merit. On the other hand, female writers with the passage of time are becoming more aware of gender bias that is inherent in language and try to demote sexism and gender stereotypes prevalent in conventional discourse (Dickert, 2015). Many of them such as Shahraz, Moni Mohsin and Kamila Shamsi have represented women as powerful, independent and intelligent. Nevertheless, their works are not totally free from gender stereotypes and sexism due to the power of the „internalized patriarchy“ and „man made language“ that is the only tool at their disposal (Chaudhary, 2013; Sheikh, Ali, Suleman, Ali & Munir, 2019). The present study is therefore carried to explore how Pakistani male and female writers differ in their portrayal of women in terms of sexism, gender bias and stereotyping in their works.

„Saleema“ by Mueenuddin portrays a dismal picture of a woman who, as a kitchen maid, in the household of K. K. Harouni, tries desperately to hunt for male servants using her sexual agency so that she could settle with one of them in order to get protection in the form of food and residence. She is sexually abused, rejected and made fun of by the majority of male servants. Shahraz’s „Zamindar’s Wife“, on the other hand, depicts a strong female protagonist, Noor, who actively participates in the action of the story and enjoys a powerful status. She takes stand
against her husband, a rich landowner, who wants to usurp the land of the villagers and use it for bauxite mining. She helps the villagers in getting their land back and sticks to her strict moral principles without fearing the consequences.

1.1 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it is an important addition to previously conducted researches which claim that gender of a writer plays an important role in linguistic choices in his/her writings and that male authors’ writings are predominantly sexist showing patriarchal patterns of gender bias against women.

2. Literature Review

Literature review has been divided into two parts. The first part discusses the important approaches to ‘feminist stylistics’ whereas the second part reviews the important studies that have carried out in this field.

Feminism as a movement started roughly near the end of 19th century and took different forms to achieve political, economic, personal, and social rights for women. Feminist stylistics came into prominence near the end of twentieth century with the publication of Mills (1995) most celebrated work in this area. As a sub-branch of stylistics it applies stylistic models and frameworks to investigate gender concerns that are linguistically encoded in texts (Montoro, 2014).

The first significant critical intervention in literary texts came from Woolf (1929) who highlighted the distorted and stereotypical representations of women in texts written from males’ perspective. She contended that women’s writings lacked universality and emphasised on the need of privacy and economic independence of women if they were to produce standard literary texts. She also focused on the need to develop a feminine language that would be suitable
for expressing women’s experiences.

Lakoff (1973) studied different American social dialects and described various features of women’s language in her work. She argued that women’s inferior status in society is highlighted not only in the language used about them by men but also through the type of language they themselves are habitual to use. She contended that the excessive use of fillers, tag questions, empty adjectives and intensifiers in women’s talk indicate uncertainty and lack of confidence on their part.

Spender’s (1980) theory of dominance is considered as „one of the most influential contributions to the debate on sexism in language” (Simpson, 1993, p. 148). She argued that language is made by men to dominate and control women. Women’s subjugation is therefore visible in the only type of language available at their disposal. She, therefore, maintains, much like Woolf (1929), that reinvention and rejuvenation of the (English) language is necessary to eliminate and tackle sexism.

Mills (1995) coined the term „feminist stylistics‘ which referred to stylistic analysis of text to expose the sexism present in linguistic and grammatical choices so as to determine how lexical items, point of view, metaphor and transitivity choices are related to matters of gender and to figure out if women’s writing practices could be described. Mill’s feminist stylistics will be further discussed in the framework.

A number of significant research studies have been carried out in the field of feminist stylistics which focus to explore women’s writing style as distinguished from that of men’s. Many researchers have also been interested to expose gender bias and sexism in literary and non-literary texts.

Ufot (2012) carried out a lexicogrammatical study of Austen’s „Pride and Prejudice’ and Sotomi’s „The General’s Wife’ to reveal that both the female authors employed essentially
feminist lexicogrammatical tropes such as parataxis, antithesis, anticlimax, semi-colon and euphuism as well as metaphors of building, room, nature and environment to depict the rejection of male stereotypes. The study appraised the major lexical and grammatical components of the „female sentence” or „écriture féminine” to highlight that women’s writing is stylistically unique and not just a deviation from men’s writing which is conventionally considered as the norm.

Wilhelmsson (2014) studied “genderlect” or “gendered sentence” in women’s writing. The researcher used feminist stylistic approach to appreciate Angela Carter’s rewritten fairy tales in her collection of short stories who tried to present a counter-image of women both in language and social construction.

Kang & Wu (2015) analysed the transitivity patterns of Lawrence’s „Lady Chatterley’s Lover” based on the transitivity model described by Mill’s (1995). The transitivity analysis of speech choices revealed the male-dominance theme in the novel. The researchers argued that the apparently woman-friendly vision of the female protagonist was nothing more than the one-sided glorification of phallic dominance as the analysis exposed it was the male protagonist who was given an active dominating role in the couple’s love interactions.

Darweesh & Ghayadh (2016) focused on the idea of „genderlect” or „gendered style” in women’s writing. Their stylistic analysis of Atwood’s novel The Handmaid’s Tale revealed that ideology and power relations are not fixed and negotiable as Atwood wrote from feminist perspective and challenged the male dominant sociocultural norms and ideologies.

A few feminist studies have also been carried out on Shahraz’s (1998) Zamindar’s Wife and Mueenuddin’s (2009) collection of interconnected short stories called „In Other Rooms, Other Wonders” of which „Saleema” is a part.

Wife based on the model provide by Amina Wadood. Her analysis indicated that although the female character ruled in the household affairs yet she had to struggle hard to oppose the patriarchal structure of society to assert her right to take part in the affairs of the outside world.

Nazar & Sultana (2014) used Michael Halliday’s transitivity model to analyse clauses selected from Muneeza Shamsie’s edited collection of „And the World Changed” and Mueenuddin’s (2009) „In Other Rooms Other Wonders”. Their study highlighted the dominance of material processes in the clauses take from both the short story collections. However, whereas Mueenuddin used the processes of doing, associated with power, mainly with the male characters, the female writers of Shamsie’s collection primarily attached these with female characters. Their results indicated the female writers growing awareness of their rights in the patriarchal society.

Sheikh et al., carried out a feminist stylistic analysis at the word level of selected short stories from Mueenuddin’s (2009) “In Other Rooms, Other Wonders” and Muneeza Shamsie’s edited collection of “And the World Changed”. Their analysis indicated that the male writer used more sexist language as compared to the females who portrayed independent and active female characters.

The review of previous studies indicates that although a feminist stylistic analysis of Mueenuddin’s collection of short stories has been carried out at the word level, however, it has not been analysed at the sentence level nor has anyone carried out a comparative study of the two selected short stories which are the objectives of the present study.

3. Methodology

The present study has employed qualitative approach to analyse the data, that is, data have been analysed in terms of emerging themes and patterns in the selected texts. For this purpose, two
short stories of Pakistani writers, one from a male author and one from a female author, have been selected as sample for data analysis. Data from these short stories have been selected using purposive sampling technique, as this is considered the best technique for analysing texts qualitatively. As the feminist stylistic analysis of Mueenuddin’s (2009) „Saleema“ has already been carried out at the word level by a previous researcher, therefore, the present study has focused on highlighting sexism present at the phrase/sentence level.

3.1 Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to investigate the way female and male writers differ in representations of women in their works. The study is purposively designed to explore the impact of patriarchal ideology on female and male writers in the use of lexical and grammatical choices and other gender-stereotyped patterns in their works.

3.2 Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, the study is designed to answer the following research questions.

a) How do male and female writers differ in portrayal of female characters?

b) What is the influence of the gender of the writer on the selection of specific vocabulary?

d) How does the internalization of patriarchal ideology influence the choice of language used by female and male writer?

c) How do specific language choices may serve the interests of some people to the detriment of others?

3.3 Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in its scope as data has been taken from the short stories of only two Pakistani writers. Furthermore, due to time and space limitations analysis has been carried out
only at the phrase/sentence level. Though the sample is too small to generalize the results, yet the study is significant as the results are in line with other important studies which have highlighted the role literary texts play in the marginalization of women.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

The study employs feminist stylistic model presented by Mills (1995) for exposing sexism and gender bias in a given piece of text. A feminist stylistic analysis looks at a text at three levels: word level, phrase/sentence level and discourse level.

At the word level, sexism can be analysed by “examining examples of usage such as the sex-specific pronoun use, the misuse of generics, address terms and the negative descriptions of females in a variety of texts” (Mills, 1995, p. 62).

For analysing a text at the Level of Phrase/Sentence, Mills (1995) suggests to take account of the words „in relation to their co-text, their context, the history of their usage and also the background knowledge which is needed for their making sense” (p.98). Sexism at the phrase/sentence level can be analysed by looking at ready-made phrases, jokes and humour, and transitivity choices.

At the discourse level, a gendered analysis can be done by focusing on the larger-scale structures and patterns which determine the occurrence of specific individual lexical items. In this way, the analysis links the word and the phrase with a larger notion of ideology through these textual patterns and structures that Mills (1995) terms „gendered frameworks”, since they function at a stereotypical level to determine the type of language which is produced. Analysis at the discourse level is concerned with the construction of characters in texts, examining the use of particular language for the description of the fragmentation of the female body and looking at larger-scale schemata which determine the roles which women are allocated in much writing.
The present study is limited to the analysis of the text at the phrase/sentence level only. For a thorough and systematic analysis of the selected short stories, this study will draw on the synoptic questions that are provided by Mills (1995).

4. **Data Analysis**

As stated earlier, two short stories have been selected for feminist stylistic analysis. The data has been analysed at the phrase/sentence level to see how male and female writers differ in terms of using sexism and stereotypes in their writings. The investigation at the phrase/sentence level includes the analysis of inferences, ready-made phrases, jokes and humour, and transitivity choices.

4.1 **Presupposition and Inference**

Mills (1995) states that in order to deconstruct sexism in language, the reader needs to look beyond the literal meanings of phrases and sentences to infer what the writer is trying to imply. Inferences are implied through words or a piece of information that lead the reader to make assumptions and draw final decision or judgment. For example, a surgery advertisement which is targeted at women with the question, „Are you happy with your looks?” is a rhetorical one with the presupposition that women are not happy with their looks as their beauty is one element which is always in need of improvement. The add tries to infer that in order to be happy with their looks, women will need surgery (Mills, 1995).

In Mueenuddin’s (2009) Saleema we find many such inferences which have gender bias against women. While describing Saleema, the writer says, “at fourteen, she became the plaything of a small landowner‟s son” (p.1) implying that when a man and a woman have illicit relationship with each other it is the woman who is to be regarded as the „plaything’ reducing her to level of an object. The sole purpose of Saleema‟s life is to prey and hunt for a man who could
give her protection. She eloped and married a man in her teens as she thought „he was saving her” (p. 6). This expression implies that women are week and always in need of the protection of men. On establishing an illicit relationship with Rafik, who is the so called respectable servant in the household of K. K. Harouni, she feels that she too has become respectable. “She wanted to explain [to her mother] that she had become respectable” (p.26). However, the reader is made to infer that such concept of respectability is not meant for women like Saleema whom the patriarchal society deems fit to be used only as „plaything”. Therefore, soon, she loses her newly found respectability when Rafik’s wife, who has been living away, approaches him in K. K. Harouni’s mansion. Rafik tells Saleema about his wife, “My honour has always been perfectly safe in her hands” (p.27). The message that is easy to infer is that, it”s not a man”s own action but that of his wife”s that can put his honour at stake as we see Rafik remains respectable while Saleema becomes a butt of laughter even though both are equally involved in wrong actions. In a patriarchal society, once a woman loses her honour by indulging in an immoral sexual activity, she has no right to claim respectability afterwards while men like Rafik can enjoy perfect respectability in the society and loyalty on the part of their wives even after forming illicit relationship with other women. Thus the patriarchal society has one rule for men while another for women.

Shahraz (1998) on the other hand, implies positive things about her female protagonist who is described as „both intelligent and astute” (p.19). The reader can infer from this statement that her actions will be wise and principled. The writer reinforces this statement through her actions when, Noor, the female protagonist, very wisely manages to retrieve the documents of the villagers from her husband”s cupboard and hands these over to them. She would leave him rather than compromise her principles. “She wouldn”t be bullied by him - he knew her well. She would
have no second thoughts on leaving him, especially as she believed that she was morally right and he was in the wrong” (p.19).

Shahraz’s (1998) female protagonist is not ready to leave her principles due to the fear of being abandoned by her husband. The writer implies that women are capable of making right decisions and correcting their husbands faults as Noor’s husband acknowledges, “I nearly made a fool of myself, but you saved me – I am honoured in having a wife like you (p.21). So foolish decisions can be made by either man or woman which is against the patriarchal ideology where foolishness is attached to women’s actions only. However, it is noteworthy that the patriarchal concept of ‘izzat’ or ‘honour’ has been used by Shahraz (1998) as well when describing the character of Noor, the female protagonist, she says, “She would never let him or his ‘izzat’ down no matter what she was like in private” (p. 5). This indicates that the influence of ‘internalized patriarchy’ is not easy to shed and even female writers unconsciously think on the patriarchal lines in certain matters such as the concept of ‘honour’ which is attached with the actions of females only. Another noteworthy point is Shahraz’s (1998) obsession with beauty which she attaches with her heroin such as, „Noor walked gracefully to her seat; a tall, elegant, beautiful woman”, „even the birds seemed to have stopped singing, entranced by her appearance”, „their eyes kept wandering to her beautiful, well sculptured features”, „the men tried to resist the impulse to keep looking at her”, „It was almost as if Allah had been carried away when it came to Noor” (p.3) and so on. Though Shahraz’s (1998) heroin is intelligent and bold apart from being beautiful but the way she has devoted passages to describe Noor’s beauty implies to the reader that beauty is an essential element for a female protagonist to possess. A true feminist must resist this desire and focus on other merits of their female characters to demote the stereotypes attached to their portrayal.
4.2 Use of Metaphor

Metaphor is used to describe one thing in terms of another. Lakoff and Johnson describe metaphor as the essence of understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. They see metaphor as a fundamental element in the way that we structure our thoughts and words and describe these as one of the building blocks of our thinking, at both the level of language acquisition and language-use (as cited by Mills, 1995, p.105). The metaphors, by compensating meanings into one word, has great impact on both the unconscious of the individual and the collective unconscious of society (Locan, 1977).

In Mueenuddin’s (2009) Saleema, the figurative language used employs mostly animal and food imagery. Much of the food imagery used refers to Saleema’s sexuality such as „black mango” and „ice cream” are used to refer to her bosom in an insulting way by two of the drivers that are employed in K. K. Harouni’s mansion. Hassan, a cook, pinches Saleema’s bosom saying, „Here’s where the real meat is” (p.13). According to Lakoff, (1973) the use of food imagery for women or parts of their body implies that Women are at the disposal of men for them to enjoy and taste. Just like food, women, too, are available to be consumed. Lakoff further argues that the metaphors that are used for women’s genitalia are mostly perceived as receptacles to emphasize the passive role women adopt in sexual intercourse. Metaphors such as „box”, „jelly”, „hole” and „honey pot” are commonly used to refer to women’s genitalia. In Saleema, one of the drivers refers to Saleema’s private parts insultingly suggesting to the other, „You can wipe your dipstick after checking the oil” (p.4).

Mills (1995) argues that sexuality is often described at a metaphorical level in terms of heat and lack of heat. Mueenuddin uses the metaphor of heat in describing Saleema such as “she loved the heat, thick night air, and the smell of the water and dust” (p.5) and “Saleema kept
wiping her eyes and face with her dupatta as if she were hot” (p.15). As Saleema is depicted as a woman of low morality who is ready to have sex with anyone in return for money and food, the metaphor of heat is used for her by the writer which symbolizes her lust.

Other metaphors that are used for Saleema include animal imagery such as Rafik says to Saleema, “You’re the strange one following this old man around like a little sheep. Most shepherds are young boys” (p.18). Martin (2011) argues that the animal analogies that men use when they refer to women as pets (such as „pussy’ or „kitty”) imply that a woman has to be domesticated and tamed. The animal imagery that is used in the above lines refers to Saleema as a sheep who needs to be tamed, fed and guided by „shepherds” that refers to men. When Saleema visits her village to deliver her baby, her mother abuses her saying, “You gravid bitch, coming here puffed up after your whoring. This isn’t a hotel” (p.26). Martin (2011), in her interpretation of animal imagery that is used for men and women, argues that in the pair „dog”/ „bitch”, very negative connotations are attached with the female pet which is taken to be a pet “gone wrong” which has become a wild animal, has “usurped the master’s control…[and] taken over his territory”. All the examples that have been analysed above are used to refer to females or female body parts figuratively to demean them.

Shahraz (1998) begins the story in the traditional way giving a stereotypical image of a „Zamindarni”. Her protagonist, Noor, who is the wife of a rich landowner, is initially described as „haughty and proud” by the villagers, with coldness in her eyes for her husband. One of the villagers describes her as „a proud bitch” which has very negative connotations. However, as the story progresses, all these stereotypes are demoted and broken by the writer. She sympathizes with the villagers and helps them getting their lands back from her husband by taking a firm stance against him. One of the villagers remembers that, “her son had labelled her as a „proud
haughty bitch” and now she was shedding tears for him.” (p. 12). „The cold glint in her eyes” changes into warmth as soon as the tension is resolved between the husband and the wife as is indicated by the lines “The warmth flood into her eyes now glowing like gems.” (p.21)

The author refers to her protagonist saying “She was the light of his [= husband”s] life— the noor” (p. 19) which is a very positive metaphor and traditionally in Pakistani society, it is used for a husband who is consider the „noor” of his wife. Shahraz (1998) has switched the traditional roles by employing positive and powerful metaphors for her female protagonist and all the negative metaphors which are employed in the beginning are soon negated as the story progresses to demote the negative stereotypes which are usually associated with women.

4.3 Jokes and Humour

Mills (1995) argues that “sexism may be disguised under the cover of humour, the reader may unwittingly participate in the perpetuation of the sexism embedded in the text when s/he laughs at the wit (p.106). She says that jokes function as a way of affirming sexist views within society. Some may find them amusing while other may look at them to be the evidence of the misogynistic attitude of the society.

In Mueenuddin”s (2009) Saleema, we find a few instances of jokes which are targeted at Saleema. The conversation between the two drivers who talk about Saleema”s bosom and private parts is intended to employ wit and humour such as:

„Give us some of that black mango. It’s a new variety!”

„No, it’s smooth like ice cream, I swear to God my tongue is melting.”

„You can wipe your dipstick after checking the oil!”

One of them pretended to be defending her. „How dare you say that!” (p. 4)

Later in the story Hassan, the cook, also cuts jokes on Saleema saying „she”s a virgin ever
since she rowed across the river” (p.14) meaning just the opposite. Though all the male servants themselves are corrupt but it is only Saleema who has been made fun of. The humour that is used in the short story is very perverse kind of humour which can only be enjoyed by men of low mentality who see women as objects to be enjoyed and laughed at.

Shahraz (1998) on the other hand, does not employ any such perverse kind of humour. Her work is free from any humour with sexist undertones.

4.4 Transitivity

The concept of transitivity is associated with Halliday’s work in systemic linguistics from the late 1960s onwards. The system of transitivity involves three main types of processes (material, mental and relational) together with the participants in these processes and their attendant circumstances. Material processes involve actions which can be observed in the real world and which have consequences, for example, „She broke a pencil”. Mental process largely take place in the mind for example „She thought of going there’ while relational processes relate two elements together for example „She is intelligent”. Within material action processes, there are two further choices, between „material action intention” and „material action supervention”. With material action intention, the action is performed with a clear will or intension, for example, „I picked up a spoon to eat”; but material action supervention involves those processes where things are not done intentionally, for example, „I broke my favorite glasses”.

The choices made on a syntactic level are significant as they are part of the representation of character. “The extent to which a character is the passive „victim” of circumstance, or is actively in control of the environment, making decisions and taking action, is one of the concerns of feminist stylistics.” (Mills, 1995)

The transitivity analysis of selected clauses from Mueenuddin’s (2009) „Saleema” and
Shahraz’s (1998) “Zamindar’s Wife” is given below. Twenty clauses (material processes =10, mental processes = 5, relational processes = 5) from each short story have been selected purposively. On the basis of analysis, a comparison is made the way male and female writers differ in the representations of women.

4.5 Transitivity Analysis of Selected Clauses from Mueenuddin’s (2009) Saleema

a). Material Processes

1. In everyone, she had opened her legs for the cook (p.1). = material action intention
   (actor = female, affected=female body part)

2. She kept bumping her hip against the pillar (p. 15). = material action intention (actor=
   female, affected=female body part)

3. She had painted her nails the night before (p.10). = material action intention (actor=
   female, affected=female body part)

4. She threw a little twig into the fire (p. 12) = material action intention (actor= female
   affected= a little twig)

5. She cradled the baby in her hands (p.25). = material action intention (actor = female,
   affected= the baby)

6. She put her arms around him (p. 15). = material action intention (actor = female body
   part, affected = male)

7. He kissed her neck (p.16). = material action intention (actor = male, affected = female)

8. He lay on her (p.20). = material action intention (actor = male, affected = female)

9. He rolled her over onto the bed (p.20). = material action intention (actor = male, 
   affected = female)

10. [He] held her (p.20). = material action intention (actor = male, affected = female)
b). Mental Processes

11. She thought of herself, alone, her husband on drugs (p.6). = mental process internal

12. She thought he was saving her (p.6). = mental process internal

13. She felt pretty (p.10). = mental process internal

14. She knew he wouldn”t marry her (p.14). = mental process internal

15. She wanted to explain that she had become a respectable woman (p.25). = mental process internal

c). Relational Processes

16. Her face (Carrier) had softened (Attribute) (p.22).

17. Within two years she (Carrier) was finished (Attribute)(p.32).

18. She herself(Carrier) at fourteen became the plaything(Attribute) of a small landowner”s son (p.1).

19. The stark fact of her body shown to him (Carrier) must be worth something (Attribute)(p.31).

20. She (Carrier) still had some of the girl”s gravity (Attribute) (p.2).

4.6 Transitivity Analysis of Selected Clauses from Shahraz”s (1998) Zamindar”s Wife

a). Material processes

1. She sifted through some documents and took them out (p.7). = material action intention (actor = female, affected= some documents)

2. She tore each document one by one (p.7). = material action intention (actor = female, affected= each document)

3. She had very adeptly destroyed his plans (p.17). = material action intention (actor = female, affected= his plans)
4. She had very neatly usurped his role (p.17). = material action intention (actor = female, affected= his role)

5. Her guests were honoured, gratified and humbled by her presence (p.6). = material action intention (actor = female, affected= her guests)

6. He kissed the bare skin of her (p.2). = material action intention (actor = male, affected= female body part)

7. He gently brought her face closer to his (p.20). = material action intention (actor = male, affected= female body part)

8. His fingers moved upwards to thread themselves in the silken folds of her hair (p.21) = material action intention (actor = male body part, affected= female body part)

9. Noor’s hand went to his face in the form of a caress (p.21). = material action intention (actor = female body part, affected= male body part)

10. He brought her hand to his lips (p.21). = material action intention (actor = male, affected= female body part)

b). Mental Processes

11. Her mind revolted from the idea (p.7). = mental process internal

12. She had seen the devastation which opencast mining had cast (p.7). = mental process internal

13. She was determined to stare him out (p.18). = mental process internal

14. She did not fear her husband anger (p.7). = mental process internal

15. She decided to visit Younis’ family’s home (p.10). = mental process internal

c). Relational Processes

16. She (Carrier) was furious (Attribute) (p.2).
17. She (Carrier) wasn’t just the decorative wife (Attribute)(p.18).

18. She (Carrier) was both very intelligent and astute (Attribute)(p.19).

19. She (Carrier) was the light of his life (Attribute)(p.19).

20. She (Carrier) was the center of his world (Attribute)(p.19).

The transitivity analysis of the selected clauses from Mueenuddin’s Saleema lays bare the picture of a stereotypical woman of patriarchal society. The material processes that are used for her do not render any power to her because most of her actions affect her own body parts such as „her legs”, „her hip”, „her nails”, and „her arm”. Once her action affects „the baby” and once „a small twig”. Of the five clauses (6-10) which show her romantic interaction with a male partner, she affects him only once while four times being affected by him. This indicates that a woman only has power on her own body, inanimate objects or small babies. However, when it comes to her involvement with a man, the power and agency is shifted to him. It is interesting to note that the female protagonist employs her sexual agency to prey men yet she is rendered powerless in the romantic scenes. This is a typical patriarchal thought, where a woman is considered a plaything in the hands on a man.

The mental processes depict Saleema as the „senser”, however, no intellectual touch is given to her senses or mental capacity. The phenomena that she senses indicate that she is intellectually inferior as her thoughts revolve around her basic survival and existence such as her being „alone”, being saved by a man, getting petty respectability and getting married. Similarly, in the relational processes, stereotypical attributes are given to her that are either linked to her physical appearance such as „her face was softened” or to her sexuality such as „some of the girl’s gravity”
and „a plaything”.

On the other hand, the transitivity analysis of the selected clauses from Shahraz’s (1998) „Zamindar’s wife” indicate that her female protagonist, Noor, is actively in control of her environment. The analysis of material processes indicates that she is the „actor” in most of these processes and unlike Mueenuddin’s protagonist Saleema who is not given any agency to affect her environment except for her own body parts or inanimate objects, Noor in Zamindar’s Wife is given a powerful role. Most of her actions affect her husband, the symbol of patriarchy, directly or indirectly such as his „documents” are sifted through and torn, „his plans” are destroyed and „his [patriarchal] role” has been usurped by her.

The mental processes that are used for her indicate that she is capable of intellectual and high order thinking. Unlike Saleema, whose thought process revolves around her own existence, Noor is capable of thinking critically about what is going around in her environment such as „the devastation, caused by open mining. She is capable of taking her own decisions as she „decided” to visit one of the poor villagers against the wishes of her husband. She has no „fear” of her husband as she knows she is morally on the right. Thus the mental processes show a very unconventional picture of a wife.

In the relational processes powerful attributes are used for her such as „furious”, „centre of his world”, „noor of his life” and „not a decorative wife”.

Mills (1995) suggests to question the construction of a character who is apparently assertive and in control of her life and see whether her behaviour reflects these characteristics in every aspect of her life such as in romantic aspects as Mills argues that stereotyping in romantic encounters has a strong hold in popular fiction. The transitivity analysis of the 4 clauses (7-10), which depict the romantic encounter between Noor and her husband, indicate that out of the four
processes the female affects the male only once while being affected by him thrice which validates Mills (1995) argument that stereotyping is common in romantic encounters. Even the female author unconsciously depicts her female protagonist as a passive receiver of man’s actions in romantic interactions.

5. Findings and Discussion

The feminist stylistic model presented by Mills (1995) serves as a powerful tool for exposing the overt and covert sexism present in a text. The analysis of the short stories by a male and a female author on the phrase/sentence level clearly indicates a great difference in the way female characters have been portrayed by these authors. In Mueenuddin’s (2009) short story „Saleema” the character of the female protagonist has been portrayed from a typical male”’s perspective. It is the picture of a poor woman who is obsessed with the idea of getting protection and respectability which she thinks she can get only if she becomes successful in forming a stable relationship with a male. For this purpose, she is not hesitant to use her sexual agency for hunting the male servants employed in K.K. Harouni”’s mansion. This is a typical patriarchal thought where women are considered weak and frail and thus are in need of some strong protection which can only be provided by men in the form of father, brother or husband. Though Saleema has got a husband of her own but he being a drug addict cannot provide her protection and rather depends on her earnings to provide for his needs. She, therefore, is forced to work not only for her own sake but also for providing drugs to her husband while at the same time prey for any suitable man who could provide her protection in the form of food, money and shelter. One may ask, why didn’t she simply left her good for nothing drunkard husband and earned in a respectable way without offering her body as a piece of cake to any male she came into contact with. A female writer is not likely to present such picture of a woman. Only a male writer with
the patriarchal bent of mind can give such a picture. In a patriarchal society, a husband is still a husband, and a superior being, even if he is a drunkard and the wife is supposed to be bound to him forever.

The language choices that Mueenuddin (2009) makes indicate a great effect of internalized patriarchy. As the analysis shows that Saleema’s body becomes an object to be played with and made fun of and she bears all this patiently simply to find a suitable man who could provide her protection as she being a woman is unable to protect herself. The metaphors of food imagery like „black mango” and „ice cream” which refer to her bosom carry negative and insulting connotations. Similarly, the animal imagery like the „bitch” which is used for Saleema by her own mother and „sheep’ which Rafik uses for her while referring to her being weak and in need of guidance of „young shepherds” by which he means young men, all contain sexist undertones. The transitivity analysis shows that the female character is deprived of any powerful agency and the only agency that she employs is her sexual agency which gives a very negative impact of female gender in general as the only power or agency that has been associated with them is the one which involves them in establishing illicit relationship with men.

The portrayal of the female character by Shahraz (1998), on the other hand, gives a very different picture. It is the picture of a woman who is bold, astute and intelligent. These are the qualities which are mostly associated with males in a patriarchal society and rarely attached with women who are widely considered weak, foolish and frail who can go astray if not given the proper protection of men. The analysis shows that Shahraz’s female protagonist, Noor, is an intellectual woman and her thoughts are not simply limited to her own existence but she has a keen eye on her surroundings as well. When she learns that her husband is involved in an illegal transaction of the villagers’ land, she takes the bold step by ripping all the documents that her
husband has prepared to usurp the lands of the villagers and returns the property files to their respective owners. Thus, she is able to make bold decisions without fearing to be deserted by her husband which again is a very unconventional picture of a women in a patriarchal society where women, on the first hand, are not even portrayed intelligent enough to understand the business affairs and secondly, they are always shown to be afraid of interfering in their husbands’ affairs for the fear of being abandoned by them and losing the protection which is essential for them to attain respectability in the patriarchal society.

However, the analysis reveals that the impact of the internalised patriarchy is not easy to shed and even a female writer, too, unconsciously uses sexist overtones in the portrayal of women such as Shahraz’s (1998) obsession in describing Noor’s beauty, and the concept of „izzat” that she attaches with the character of the woman only. Similarly, the transitivity analysis shows that though her female character has been portrayed as a bold and intelligent woman who is actively in control of her environment but is rendered powerless in the romantic encounter with her husband which according to Mill”s (1995) is equal to objectifying women.

6. Conclusions and Future Recommendations

The analysis indicates that the male and female authors differ considerably in their portrayal of women. The portrayal of the female protagonist, Saleema, by Mueenuddin (2009) is full of sexist overtones, both overt and covert. At the level of the phrase/sentence these have been highlighted in the use of jokes, inferences, metaphor and transitivity patterns. The jokes referred to Saleema are obscene, the inferences the reader is encouraged to make are representatives of typical patriarchal thought such as objectifying the women, the attachment of the concept of honour with them and depicting them as week and always in desperate need of the protection of men for attaining respectability. The same purpose has been achieved by the use of metaphor. By
employing animal and food imagery negative connotations have been attached with the character of Saleema. The transitivity analysis shows that she has been deprived of any agency except for the sexual one which has very negative connotations.

The analysis also reveals that the internalization of the patriarchal society, which is not easy to escape, has a deep effect on the choice of language that Mueenuddin (2009) has made. Indeed, the obscene jokes cut at Saleema, the use of metaphors for her with negative connotations and depriving her of any agency except for the sexual one in transitivity patterns all are the results of the powerful impact of internalised patriarchy. Though the patriarchal structure effects female author’s frame of mind too, but its impact can be clearly seen on the choices of language made by the male author who wants to keep the hegemony of men over women intact. The choices made by the author in the use of metaphor, jokes and the transitivity patterns along with the presuppositions and the inferences that the reader is encouraged to make clearly serve the interests of male gender while being detrimental to the female sex.

The portrayal of Noor, the female protagonist, in Shahraz’s (1998) short story gives a very different picture of a woman than the one portrayed by Mueenuddin (2009). Noor is shown as an intelligent and bold woman who is not afraid of taking a stand against her husband or being deserted by him when it comes to sticking to her principles. She “very neatly usurps” her husband’s patriarchal role when she takes the bold step of returning the property files back to their owners. She has been described as being the “noor” of her husband’s eyes, a title which is often given to a husband in a patriarchal society. The presuppositions and inferences that Shahraz (1998) implies highlight positive aspects of her female protagonist. Similarly, the positive metaphors used and most of the transitivity patterns employed portray a powerful picture of a woman who is actively in control of her environment. However, the impact of the
internalized patriarchy can also be seen in her representation of the female character, such as while describing Noor as a bold, intelligent and astute woman, Shahraz never forgets to describe her matchless beauty which shows a clear impact of the patriarchal thought. Secondly, she attaches the concept of „izzat” with the female who is considered responsible for protecting or ruining her husbands „honour” which again shows the patriarchal impact. Thirdly, the transitivity patterns of her romantic interaction with her husband portray her as passive recipient of her husband”s actions which indicates a stereotypical picture of a woman who is often objectified in such scenes.

Although the impact of internalised patriarchy is not easy to escape with, yet Shahraz (1998) portrays and represents her female protagonist in a very positive light and makes positive and powerful vocabulary choices such as „she had very neatly usurped his role”, „she was the „noor” of his eyes”, „she was the center of his world” etc. which sure serve the interests of female gender while proving detrimental to the male status quo. While Mueenuddin (2009) has represented the female character from a male”s perspective, Shahraz, without doubt, has adopted a female point of view in the portrayal of her female protagonist.

Future researchers may explore the same data to decode sexism present in the texts by using Mills (1995) model at the discourse level. Another possibility can be extending the present study by using a larger sample to have further insights on the findings.

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