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MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN: A FEMINISTIC VIEW OF FAIQA MANSAB'S THIS HOUSE OF CLAY AND WATER

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the various aspects of exploitation and marginalization in Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water*. The female protagonist of the novel, Nida proves herself to rebel the conventional social norms and traditional values although faced a lot of hurdles in a male dominated society. The study also investigated the factors responsible for the violation of women empowerment in Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water* (2017) such as conventional social norms which restrict women to their homes, male dominated society, women's subordination in a coherent and systematic way that integrates class and sex, as well as other aspects of identity such as race, ethnicity or sexual orientation, with the aim of using this analysis to help liberate women. The result-oriented discussion examined the role of Faiqa Mansab in taking a look at the traumatic women's minds by presenting the character of Nida and the bodies subjected to the social system defined by patriarchal codes. There is also room for the future researchers to conduct research in the same field by selected another literary piece.

INTRODUCTION

Female's oppression has been emphasized in various feminist works as the chief issue among many. Many feminist writers have focused through their literature that men are considered superior to women not only owing to their biological constructions but society also has played a pivotal role in demeaning females as it ingrains the seed of inferiority in the minds of females since childhood. Among different voices chanting feminism, Faiqa Mansab's voice got attention with launching of her debut work *This House of Clay and Water* in 2017.

Faiqa Mansab is an emerging Pakistani writer living in Lahore. She has a practice of ten years in the areas of education and management. Ms Faiqa Mansab has attained her degree in Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing with distinction and conferred with an award for the unrivaled thesis in 2014 from Kingston University London that was supervised by renowned Turkish writer Elif Shafak. *This House of Clay and Water* (2017) is Mansab's heart-rending first fictional work. It is the ultimate version of her prized and award-winning MFA thesis and was longlisted in 2018 for Karachi Literature Festival Getz Pharma Fiction Prize and the Karachi Literature German Peace Prize. From Government College University Lahore, Mansab got her degree of MPhil in English Literature. Being a visiting lecturer in Kinnaird College Lahore, she delivers lectures on creative writing. Now-a-days Faiqa Mansab is working on her second novel.

The present study is going to focus on the oppression, inequality and phases of womanhood in patriarchal Pakistani society with special reference to Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water* (2017) and it also underpins the stereotypes of women as victimized and oppressed actors only. For women in patriarchal Pakistani society, power and authority over their existence and gender roles are envisioned by male-controlled consanguinity measures. Furthermore, women are supposed to be the vessels of integrity, henceforth they remain inside the four walls of homes and are considered as invisible and mute. The integrity of the lineage, the community, and eventually the country is capitalized in womenfolk. Consequently, she is also a 'female' who is considered as feeble sex, and she is the 'oppressed' who is a frailer object for the patriarchal society. Being a female, she is expected to act angelic and remain within the confines of domestic circle, no matter she is a housemaker performing her duties as a wife, a devoted child in the form of daughter, sibling in face of a sister or mother to the males of the family. She is supposed to take care of other persons in the family and perform domestic errands and organize domestic tasks and commitments. She has to bear the command of every single individual inside the domestic circle and of the external world.

Nature has created man and woman at par with each other since day one. But unfortunately, this genetic equilibrium of femininity and masculinity is not acceptable to the patriarchal society since inception. Male is presumed to be powerful being during the whole time of history and paradigm for the contemporary age. This dominance and supremacy bring about the subservience and oppression of womenfolk as compared to male in antiquity. The Creator has made man physically robust and this very physical feature of authority has

shaped him tough on a social basis. Women in the ancient times are expected to submit to the patriarchal demand of the period. The superiority of the men is confronted in terms of societal sphere that they have formed prejudices on the basis of gender no matter these inequities are connected to monetary, social and political facets of their everyday life. Womenfolk are threatened to ferocity: typically, man of the house and near relatives are responsible for women's wretched fate. Women had been openly cursed, tolerating humiliating images and even brutally murdered by stoning for transgressing the alleged values and norms of ethics, integrity and honor fixed by the men. Social restraints, societal standards, gender-prejudice, societal prohibitions, taboos and bans, double oppression and societal norms are sources of miseries of the majority of women. In South Asia, women are found to be inferior to men as they are socially, ethnically and economically dependent on men. They are mainly omitted from the process of decision making, have restricted admittance to and authority over assets, are constrained in their activities and are frequently entrapped in the menace of ferocity from male folks (occasionally from female folks and in-laws). Inclination towards son has financial, societal and religious value, whereas on account of obligation for the dowry, daughters are perceived as a monetary burden.

South Asian works in English have freshly attained unparalleled widespread consideration. Some of the landmarks symbolizing the importance of South Asian writing in English are groundbreaking work *Midnight's Children* (1981) by Salman Rushdie and the success of his later novels, a page turner *The English Patient* (1992) of Michael Ondaatje and V. S. Naipaul's Nobel Prize in Literature in 2003.

This House of Clay and Water (2017) by Faiqa Mansab illustrates how women living in Pakistani society endure physical, mental, emotional and psychological shock in a male-dominated society. Faiqa Mansab transports her reader to the old streets of Lahore, hustle and bustle of Daata Darbaar and famous bazaars of Lahore like Anarkali Bazaar in her novel. The story is about forbidden love, as it sets up the friable foundation of a rapport between a girl wedded into a well-off family and a transgender individual, frolicked out in a way that enquires religious and societal norms. This is an account of merging and separating, stereotyping and defying, patriarchy, clampdown and freedom, defilement and refurbishment, cowardice and courage. But above all, this is a tale of love, a love that blossoms at an unconventional junction and between two people who are far, far removed from each other when it comes to their past experiences. The book stopovers many taboo topics, the topic of verboten love and sex, of gender, of children being sexually raped, of mothers slipshod of their duties and fathers who cannot deal with sick children, of ambitions and desires, of the 'marriage trap' and of spirituality and penitence. Intertwined with religion, the novel ponders upon women and femininity, their desires, longings and yearnings, tribunals and quandaries.

Mansab's debutant novel records the emotive mayhem of those looking for happiness and love. The tale throws light on a conservative society's shady underbelly that is on the brink of reversion and deterioration. It underscores

Pakistani's social fault lines, its prejudice and suppression on the basis of gender. After family's desertion, many engage in frantic expeditions in order to be treasured. Seclusion might take individuals towards the brink and force people to do things they would not otherwise do. To seek true love and acceptance, Nida and Bhanggi go across the traditionally, socially and culturally permissible verge. Both of them cannot escape the trial of societal criticism and have to tolerate all the pain in their path of love.

It is an unfamiliar tale of love between imperceptible –Bhanggi and Nida. Bhanggi is imperceptible for the society where he resides whereas Nida is imperceptible for her relatives and immediate family members. The story highlights the exertions of the Third gender and its destitutions as well in a patriarchal Pakistani society where sex or gender describes the value and significance of a person. Mansab being bold enough has penned down two important taboos of Pakistani society, namely, transgender community which is ostracized and victimized and child sexual abuse. It's the story about struggle against power paradigms like patriarchy and all the other traditional and orthodox constructs of power like marriage and organized religion.

The novel reveals the stories of three characters who look for love, independence and self. It is the brawl of the individual against organized social structures: religion, gender, class, norms, traditions. Women in patriarchal societies are pushed into erasure. They have to deny individuality. Once a woman becomes a mother, she becomes Every Woman. Social psyche is so overwhelmingly worshipping a mother that any woman who isn't one, is inevitably a monster. You're either a man or a mother. If not either you are oppressed and subjugated. Not that the mothers are completely free and equal to men. The novel's depiction of contemporary Pakistani families and society – the relationship between men and women, parents and children, women and their in-laws are very artistically done.

Statement of Problem

The researcher will explore the issue of women empowerment and their unending miserable plights in male dominant society and it also highlights the suppression, subjugation, exploitation and marginalization of women with the special reference of Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water* (2017). The novel seems to be full of bleak images in which women have been not only under the set of patriarchal society but to grind under it as well. The research will also deal with the subject that what sort of pressure they are facing in male dominated society.

Significance of Study

The current research is going to highlight the problems and sufferings that women are facing inside as well as outside their homes. The research will also be carried the place of women in male dominant society in which in the name of social laws, taboos and religion they are exploited, suffered and marginalised.

On this book *This House of Clay and Water* (2017), no work from this perspective has been done.

Objective of Study

- To analyse status of women in Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water*
- To investigate the factors responsible for women's exploitation and marginalisation in Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water*
- To show Faiqa Mansab's building up her perception regarding patriarchal society in the novel

Research Questions

1. What is the status of women in Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water*?
2. What are the factors responsible for women's exploitation and marginalisation in Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water*?
3. How does Faiqa Mansab build up her perception regarding patriarchal society in the novel?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study will employ the General Theory of Feminism by Charles Fourier (1837), radical French philosopher Charles Fourier invented feminism in writing about the indelible link between women's status and social progress. "Liberty, unless enjoyed by all, is unreal and illusory" he wrote. But a true feminist Fourier was not. Though he thought 19th-century women were treated like chattel, he stopped short of rallying for complete gender equality since it didn't jive with sex differences he observed.

Charles Fourier invented the word "feminism". He wrote *The Theory of Four Movements* (1837). In this book he gave the concept of "Utopian society" and talked About women's right as well. He was totally against the female subjugation and marginalization. He wanted them free and part of the progressing society. As in his book *The Theory of Four Movements*(1837) vol.2 chapter 4 he says "The extension of women's rights is the basic principle of all social progress."

He gave the concept of liberty for women which further ignited the movement and, in his country, women got the right of voting in 1940. Fourier was against the marginalization of female just on the basis of gender issue. He wanted equal opportunities for both male and female. He saw the inferiority of female in bourgeois class female in marriage in his country France. He keenly studied the State of both men and women within civilization with immense focus on marriage. In this course of analysis, he gave importance to "the discontents of men" which contains different source of annoyance. Vigilance is one of the sources of annoyance for men which means that men need continuously watch over their wives as it is unwise to leave household totally in the hands of

housewives. So, this thing is limiting the liberty of women and questioning their abilities. And suggests the superiority of males to females.

Charles Fourier considered the liberty of women as an important ingredient in the development of best and progressed nations. As he mentioned in his book *The theory of four Movements* it is known that the best nations have always been those which concede the greatest amount of liberty to women. So, Fourier advocated the women's rights and their liberty and was totally against female marginalization and support subjugation either inside or outside the house.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature has the capacity for recreating and redefining women's roles. The aim of the researcher is to identify the representation of the roles of women and womanhood in the selected novel. Further, the researcher will observe the marginalization and exploitation that women have to endure and how it is depicted in literature in this section.

The utopian socialist and French philosopher Charles Fourier is credited with coining the term “féminisme” in 1837. Feminism is an umbrella term which comprises of several movements and ideologies whose objectives are to strive for equal political, social, economic and personal rights and privileges of both genders. It emerged in a reaction of patriarchal attitudes which denied women even of their basic human rights.

Several writers and authors utilized the word “Feminism” and they sought to describe and clarify it in different manner. A few of them utilize this to relate to certain social movements in Europe and America. While, some relate it to the notion that women lead an unjust way of living without prerogatives as well as equal opportunities, Faris (2013) clarified this notion, as: “Women need feminism because there are women who suffer injustice. Women have traditionally been dehumanized by a male dominated society, which they call patriarchy; and that has been always better to be a man” (Faris, 2013, p.1). "Feminism", the word has a long and storied history; it denotes the issues and sufferings of women, furthermore to their fantasies of true equality in man-controlled social structures, — for example, their authority, norms, desires and instructions.

Lois Tyson mentions in his book *Critical Theory Today* (2014) that Feminism is a range of social movements, political movements, and ideologies that share a common goal: to define, establish, and achieve the political, economic, personal, and social equality of the sexes. Feminism incorporates the position that societies prioritise the male point of view, and that, women are treated unfairly within those societies. Efforts to change that include fighting gender stereotypes and seeking to establish educational and professional opportunities for women that are equal to those for men.

Feminist movements have campaigned and continue to campaign for women's rights, including the right to vote, to hold public office, to work, to earn fair wages or equal pay, to own property, to receive education, to enter contracts, to

have equal rights within marriage, and to have maternity leave. Feminists have also worked to ensure access to legal abortions and social integration, and to protect women and girls from rape, sexual harassment, and domestic violence changes in dress and acceptable physical activity have often been part of feminist movements.

The feminist speeches of the 14th century never amalgamated into an intelligible thinking or program. This materialized only with the 18th century known as Enlightenment period, when females commenced to claim freedom of speech, equivalence, and equal prerogatives should be given to the both genders. *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) by Betty Friedan disapproved of the very notion that only by parenting and becoming a homemaker could females discover contentment. *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), according to The New York Times, “ignited the contemporary women's movement in 1963 and as a result permanently transformed the social fabric of the United States and countries around the world and is widely regarded as one of the most influential nonfiction books of the 20th century” (Collins, 2013, para.10).

Betty Friedan, in this book, conjectures that females are sufferers of non-realistic belief system that compels them through their spouses and children to discover their individuality and meaning in their very life. This belief system, makes females entirely lose their individuality in their domestic sphere. The presence of this belief system is explicitly pinpointed by Friedan who observes this system among middle-class societies and groups after the Second World War. On the other hand, during same period, financial thrive of America after war had concentrated on expanding emerging innovations that were expected to make domestic labor less troublesome, but which typically resulted in making females` efforts appear devoid of purpose and significance.

According to Bari, M. (2014) women's suppression and inequality goes on for generations, affecting all such as people, families and culture. South Asian culture tends to depend on many patriarchal standards and values, and women have to contend with rituals. Bari opines that it is clear from all three selected novels i.e., *Ice Candy Man* (1988), *Clear Light of Day* (1980) and *The God of Small Things* (1997) that everybody, men and women alike, has a fixed concept of which conduct is adequate when it comes to woman. Women are supposed to adhere to standards, values and expectations which men have created for them. He comes to the conclusion in the end that a woman's life is classed as a public matter. Thus, her personal rebellions are viewed as an uprising against society and men. Woman is considered responsible for the penalties she has to bear in failing to conform to societal norms and values and submitting to the wills of men. It has been a tradition since ages that the stereotypical situations of women give society the power to exert control over them and make them adhere to the societal norms.

Salahuddin, A., Zakar, M. Z., & Usman, A. (2016) explores the emblematic implication of the home, a perceptual barrier built between male and female spaces, taking in view various works of Pakistani female authors. There are popular maxims: "It is the world of a man" and "The place of a woman is within

the house." This sums up the truth as seen by patriarchy. Taking these ideas as a foundation, it describes spaces for women. It has been shown that the threshold plays a major part in deciding the standing of women in the society, i.e. whether or not women remain beyond the border line. They concluded that these Pakistani female writers selected for the study, are aware of the restriction imposed in the form of a home on to the women of Pakistani society. These Pakistani female writers also denoted it in different ways, emphasizing the obstacle in both its tangible and intangible sensibility.

For Socialist feminists, women are victims of both class and patriarchy. Nancy Holmstrom defines socialist feminism as an attempt "to understand women's subordination in a coherent and systematic way that integrates class and sex, as well as other aspects of identity such as race/ethnicity or sexual orientation, with the aim of using this analysis to help liberate women." (2003). In other words, socialist feminists see class as central to women's lives, yet at the same time not ignoring the impact of patriarchy on women's lives... For example, Juliet Mitchell believes that some aspects of women's lives in the family are economic while the others are social and ideological.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on qualitative research which the researcher uses narrative research to analyse the works besides books and other related references to support the subject the data of research is based on exploitation and marginalization in Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water* (2017). The data is taken from other sources such as journal, books of literature, author's biography, essays, article, and other relevant information. Thematic analysis of the novel has been done. The researcher has chosen for her research, the theory of feminism coined by Charles Fourier in his *The Theory of Four Movements* (1837) to be applied on Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water* (2017). Issues investigated in feminism comprise of double oppression, marginalization, exploitation, objectification, subjugation, patriarchy, stereotyping, discrimination and many more.

CONCLUSION

The social and cultural values are explored with special reference to marginalization of female character in patriarchal society. The female protagonist of the novel, Nida proves herself to be a rebel to conventional social norms and thus faces many hurdles. The study will also investigate the factors responsible for the violation of women empowerment in Faiqa Mansab's "*This House of Clay and Water*" (2017) such as conventional social norms which restrict women to their homes, male dominated society, women's subordination in a coherent and systematic way that integrates class and sex, as well as other aspects of identity such as race/ethnicity or sexual orientation, with the aim of using this analysis to help liberate women. The study will also examine the role of Faiqa Mansab in taking a look at the trauma women's minds by presenting the character of Nida and the bodies subjected to in a social system defined by patriarchal codes. The text shed light on the status of female in a male dominated society through character development. There is also room for the future

researchers to select the same literary piece and apply Marxism or Structuralism for further readings to catch the attention of students and teachers.

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