



Journal homepage: <https://jll.uoch.edu.pk/index.php/jll>

Trajectories of Masculinity and Femininity in Tehmina Durrani's Autobiographical Narrative, *My Feudal Lord*

¹Saad Salman, ² Syed Hanif Rasool

¹M.Phil Scholar, Department of English, Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saadsalman439@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Department of English, Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, syedhanifrasool@kkuk.edu.pk

Article Info Abstract

Article History:

Received 4 December 2023

Revised 12 December 2023

Accepted 30 December 2023

*Corresponding author: (S. Salman)

saadsalman439@gmail.com

Keywords:

Trajectories of Masculinity and Femininity, Social and Gender Dichotomies, *My Feudal Lord*

Tehmina Durrani, has largely been acclaimed for her audacious depiction of the predicaments of the marginalized segments of Pakistani society. Exploring gender dichotomy affecting the relationship of the narrator and her husband, the paper attempts to trace the trajectory of the split between masculinity and femininity, foregrounding a distressed marital relationship under a clash of interests between spouses. The study accentuates the variance of mental/psychological, emotional, socio-cultural, and religious chasms of the psyches of men and women by grounding the argument in question on the theorizations of masculinity and femininity as contended by Todd.W. Reeser, Linda McDowell, R.W. Connell, and feminism as argued by Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, Valerie Sanders, Sue Thornham, and Sophia Phoca. Emphasizing the individual and collective tussles between the narrator and her husband, informed by the gender issues, the study explores that *My Feudal Lord* unfolds the sheer dissimilarities between the oppressor and the oppressed, swaying between the duality of reason and feeling. Underlining further the marked traits labeled as masculine and feminine, the paper attempts to illuminate the attributes of manhood and womanhood, mainly the notion that the former have had privileges over the latter, resulting in the gender and social polarities between femininity and masculinity.

Introduction

Literature reflecting gender issues often explores different angularities, rewriting the deeps of men's and women's individual and collective psyches. Generally, literature defines men in their privileged hierarchical status and conceptualizes women in their deprived condition. In contrast, it has often been an unexplored area in the literary investigation to highlight rewriting/redefining the conflicting contours of the psyches of men and women.

Mellowing men's hierarchical perspective, aggrandizing women's compromised status, redefining the former's privileged and the latter's deprived sides, disregarding their socially laden status, underscoring the melee between masculinity and femininity, explicating a distressed marital relationship between spouses and accentuating the variance of mental/psychological, emotional, socio-cultural, and religious chasms of their psyches, this paper attempts to unfold *My Feudal Lord* (henceforth called *Lord*) on the possibilities as mentioned earlier to bring to the fore the issues of Pakistani women, as a mother, a wife, a sister, and a daughter. Focusing on their individuality, identity, and freedom that has often been viewed with hostility and neglect in the patriarchal traditional Pakistani society, *Lord* unveils the diverging outlooks between masculinity and femininity, grounding on the notions of religion, culture, society, gender, identity, and individuality.

By and large, women are regarded as inferior to men, and their issues are considered conspicuously odd and distinctive. As a result, the trajectories of their attitudes bring profound disunity in their relationship. Gender dichotomy has often left its gore on every page of human history, identifying masculinity with power and femininity with submissiveness.

Pakistani literature in English is progressive and subversive, breaking the stereotypes and giving voice to the silenced narratives. Tehmina Durrani (1953-), belonging to the post-Cold War breed of Pakistani English writers, has largely been applauded for her audacious depiction of the predicaments of the marginalized segments of Pakistani society. Debuting in Pakistan's literary world with her autobiographical narrative *Lord*, Durrani has received wide critical acclaim at both national and international levels. *Lord* depicts how the aforementioned gender dichotomies, chasms between the psyches of men and women, the controlling character of patriarchy and feudalism in Pakistan, have deprived women of their due right and role in society.

Works of authors like Tehmina have been considered as controversial, but they have remained popular due to their subversiveness and defiance, deconstructing the patriarchy and feudalism. Alluding to the terribly traumatic events of her marital life with her former husband Ghulam Mustafa Khar, a Pakistani politician, Durrani attempts to focus both in her autobiographical narrative, *Lord* and in her novel *Blasphemy* (1998) the clash between masculinity and femininity. *Blasphemy* (1998) is a serious comment on the problems and atrocities faced by women living in a society, where day after day the body keeps surrendering and the soul keeps rebelling. It uncovers the exploitation and oppression of the "Pir" and the social conditions which are mainly under the influence of the exploitive feudal, "Pirs" and their religiosity.

In a patriarchal society, men are afraid of the powerful women who can stand against them and who can carve their own niche. Femininity is often at loggerhead with masculinity and modern woman in all her private, domestic and public spheres cannot be suppressed, countering traditional oppressive patterns, and enabling herself to be cognizant of her rights and responsibilities. The aforementioned stance of modern women has inevitably created a clash of interest morphed out of the trajectories of femininity and masculinity and reflective of the gender dichotomies laden by psychological, emotional, religious and socio-cultural views of men and women.

Lord begins with the olden days of Durrani's aristocratic family. Her father, Shahkir Ullah Durrani, hailed from Charsadda, served the Governor State Bank and the Administrative Executive of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). Durrani's maternal grandfather was Sir Liaquat Hayat Khan, Nawab of the state of Patiala. Her maternal grand uncle was Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, a statesman in British India. Brought up in a relatively luxurious family, Durrani was fortunate enough to get the best available education. At seventeen, she married Anees Khan and had a daughter named Tania, but in 1976 she got divorced and married Mustafa Khar, a former chief minister and the governor of the Punjab. In the following years, Durrani experienced an immeasurable amount of miseries.

Lord has three chapters: "Lion of Punjab"; "Laws of Jungle"; and "Lioness". The first deals with the conflicts between the narrator and her spouse resulting in the former's painful marital life and the clash between General Zia and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto culminating in the 1979 Martial Law. The second begins with Khar's exile ensuing a period of torment, gloom and suffering for the narrator. The third starts with the narrator's efforts in repairing her marital bond with Khar but in vain and thereby the narrator rises as an independent woman undertaking her welfare projects and literary pursuits.

Literature Review

Several scholars have approached *Lord* from psychological and feministic stand-points.

Shivani Thakur in her article, "A Journey from Self-effacement to Self-discovery in Tehmina Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*" explores how a woman is trapped in a patriarchal snare on the one hand and is resolute to get out of it on the other. It argues the status of Muslim women in their various domestic roles, as wives, daughters, sisters and mothers in the Pakistani society being looked through the institutions of marriage and family, explicating the three phases of women. First, in the 'the feminine phase', she realizes that the aforementioned institutions tend to cause destruction of her individuality and confidence that can counter the power of the opposite gender. Second in 'the feminist phase', she encounters reasons for her suffering, i.e. external agents, ego, and fear. In the third phase, discovers her 'female' identity rejecting the antagonist's (Khar) humiliating behavior.

Deepthi and Susan Roy in their article, "The Power [b]ehind the Veil: Voice of Protest in Tehmina Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*" argues that "[w]omen are the most marginalized section of any society, any country. Their tales of woe are the same everywhere. The patriarchal hegemony has marginalized, exploited and silenced them for centuries (592)". The article highlights Durrani's writing to be a perfect portrayal of Pakistani women, a submissive and faceless creature being victimized by brutal feudal lords. Researcher also place different quotations to understand Durrani's revolt, disgust and rage towards the corrupt political system and the miserable status of womanhood.

Approaching *Lord* from a feministic standpoint, Hira Arain in her article, "Alienation of Women In Capitalist Society: A Critique On Tehmina's *My Feudal Lord* from Feminist Perspective" attempts to explore the dilemma of considering women as obsolete beings and highlights different reasons that why women are subjugated in capitalist society. Quoting Simon De Beauvoir (1949) who maintains that man has fabricated and constructed women as other, Hira argues that "[m]an is the self and the woman is other. Whatever characterizes the men, in their own view indeed,

women must be defined contrary. As men are represented biologically strong, women are represented biologically incomplete. As men represent good, women are defined as evil (704)".

Nusrat Chowdhury in her paper, "Rising above The Social Milieu: A study of Tehmina Durrani's Autobiography *My Feudal Lord*", argues that feudalism, male domination, religion and customs, as the core cause of subjugation, exploitation and overthrow of women responsible for their plight in society. Nusrat writes that "The hypocritical nature of Mustafa always restricted Tehmina Durrani and tangled her emotionally so that she may not vent her frustration and elevate her voice against the suppression of her" (27). Nusrat explores the characters of Khar who has reserved Durrani into the bulwark of quarters and slashes Tehmina from the outer world and triggered patriarchal traditions, societal and familial taming and censures feudalism to be responsible for their agony and woe.

Considering marginality in *Lord*, Rajpal Kaur in her article, "Speaking from Margins: Tehmina Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*", discusses the marginal position of women in society due to discourses like patriarchy, pseudo religion concepts, feudalism, and other social causes responsible for this. By Quoting Bhattacharya, the famous proverb of such a system "Zan, Zar, Zameen" (woman, money and land) as the source of all evil, does reflect utter disregard for women and also her commoditization (517), Rajpal exposes the feudal set up of Pakistani society which makes the plight of women worse and horrifying.

Highlighting the issues of feudal and patriarchal domination in Pakistani society, the aforementioned critics have emphasized the rebellious tenor of the autobiography deteriorating people's agony due to abuse carried out against them. However, everyone has scratched those discourses deemed for oppression of women in society such religion, culture, and male dominance. It is further projected to expose the core reasons and conflicting blows of men for such persecution against women by feudal lords and patriarchs

Methodology

In literary exploration, a theory or any notion that is obvious to a thinker or explorer is applied for the reason of explaining, predicting, understanding, and exploring a research problem. The present study is grounded on theoretical formulation of feminism, including theorization of the gender particularly, men and masculinity, women and femininity as explicated by Todd. W. Reeser, Linda Mcdowell, R.W.Connell, Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, Valerie Sanders, Sue Thornham, and Sophia Phoca which illustrates a complete deviation in opinion about man, women, masculinity and femininity. It is a qualitative research that holds a compilation of logical and idiomatic understanding pedestals purely upon my insight. *My Feudal Lord* has been textually analyzed to highlight the melee between masculine and feminine gender. Here we craft an intellectual deduction about probable elucidations from the textbook. Text is interpreted in particular culture in a specific time for the reason to acquire logic of the conduct in which human beings compose good judgment of the world about.

Feministic history makes us think about a world through new angles and areas. It has the capability to alter those societal relations which gives unjustified privileges that boosts long standings social inequalities

De Beauvoir's opinions gave more ignitions to the second wave and claimed men to be more aggressive, arrogant and disdainful towards women. (The Second Sex, 1949, 34) According to her, civilization organized by men verifies that women are lesser: she can only bring to an end this inadequacy by demolishing masculine supremacy. Women do her best to oppose, injure and rejects their conceptions to take over men, but repression build a situation of warfare (The Second Sex, 1949, 849).

The present study is based on binary structures which benefits one over the other: for example, man over woman and Linda McDowell's description of binary distinction that shows a crystal clear dichotomy between feminine and masculine gender. Masculine includes "public, outside, work, production, power and independence" in contrast the feminine are engendered as "private, inside, home, leisure/pleasure consumption, Dependence and Lack of power" (Mcdowell, 1999, 12) According to Reeser Masculinity is endorsed by the terms "muscular," "strong," "hard," "brave," and "in control" etc. While its opposite is femininity where expressions like "weak," "soft," and "emotional" come to our mind. The study also stands on R.W. Connell's practices of masculinity: that are hegemony, subordination, complicity and marginalization. Hegemony, here we see a male takes a lead in a communal life through different cultural dynamics. Complicity is a vigilant plot and one of the main significant elements in the power of masculinity because it spotlights the logical setting to dominate others. Subordination put into practice bodily and mental abuse, penalties, economic, social, and cultural prejudices, oral offenses, disgrace of any kind, private boycotts, and even conviction to death which in turn leads to corruption and immorality. Marginalization depriving subordinated classes or ethnic groups from their basic rights.

The dichotomy of "reason and feeling" is an analogous and basic facet in a split between masculinity and femininity. "Dualisms" cherished the masculine wall of the Man and Woman dichotomy as compared to the feminine. (Christine. A. James, 1997, 129).

Discussion

Simone de Beauvoir (1949) in *The Second Sex* argues that "[n]o one is more arrogant toward women, more aggressive or more disdainful than a man anxious about his own virility" (34). The nerve of a man is authoritative, while that of a woman's is submissive. Tehmina Durrani's womanhood do not allow Khar to dominate as husband while Mustafa Khar's manhood do-not allow Durrani to get dominated because every man is afraid of powerful women who is able to stand against the tyrannous masculinity of men, such a deflecting scenario brings a dichotomy between masculinity and femininity. Both are intolerant towards each other as "Men approached the 'woman question' from distinctly peculiar and idiosyncratic standpoints, their totally opposed attitudes emphasizing the profound disunity" (Sara, 2001, 17). As an autobiographer she sees Khar in every man. Women in today's world whether they are wives, mothers and working women and daughters are not geared up to agree to a second-rated position in both family and society. They are pushing all rules and regulations, and traditions that put them in a picture and robbed their intrinsic rights concerning the advantages, farm duties and prospects assigned to them. Such rebellion and deflections of emotional, religious and socio-cultural views take man and woman into a rigid dichotomy.

Masculinity can be termed as manhood or maleness involving conduct tied with men, regarded as machismo (using power while disregarding its consequences) and virility (force, verve, and sex drives). Mustafa Khar epitomizes Durrani's portrayal of men and masculinity in her autobiography, imposing his overpowering persona on the opposite gender without looking into its repercussions. As a "a feral animal" blemishing "the verve of naive women with his clout and odd rights" (Ehsan at el, 2015, 56), as Khar identifies himself as an authoritarian, conservative and overpowering individual (*Lord*, 1995, 22) epitomizing "the character of a corrupt mystic exploiting people's emotions for his carnal desires under the guise of religion" (Tahir & Rasool 2020, 7).

Critically arguing men and masculinity, Durrani foregrounds that feudal lords use religion as a cultural dynamic to rule and exercise their power on the feminine gender. They have the right to rationalize their endeavors on their own, fairly handed, analysis of the Koran.. Spotlighting the nerves of the hegemonic masculine gender, Durrani claims that "Never - ever - disobey me! You have to do what I tell you" (*Lord*, 1995, 71). Khar took advantage of his gender to dominate Durrani through a traditional logical setting that she must obey her husband's orders at any cost by giving reference to the Quran as women are property of their husbands so a classical trap has been set up to dominate women through religion showing complicity. Referring to the aforementioned feudal trap of Khar endorsing his own perspective of the Koran according to which a wife is "honor-bound to live her life according to her husband's whims" and that she is like "a man's land" (*Lord*, 1995, 81). Subordination puts into practice bodily and mental abuse, penalties, economic, social, and cultural prejudices, oral offenses, disgrace of any kind, private boycotts, and even conviction to death which in turn leads to corruption and immorality (Mcdowell, 1997, 49-50). Durrani writes how her husband's cruel and forceful "blow" would interrupt her, and on such occasions, he would use abusive language by calling her "bitch!" (*Lord*, 1995, 130) Being deprived of every due right and marginalized to a humiliating level, women have been the most vulnerable target of the oppressors and they are denied of the rights to participate in simple acts such as working for the welfare of people, whereas men on the contrary are the masters of their desires, thoughts, acts and roles in society.

Recounting how Khar uses power to bring his wives in his conservative cage, *Lord* emphasizes the seductive aspects of his personality morphing into hostility, virility and hegemonic masculinity all overpowering the femininity of his poor women. Khar's toxicity and abusive disposition can be easily ascribed to a series of masculine characteristics: muscular, strong, hard, aggressive, and controlling, whereas there can be just the opposites of the aforementioned adjectives "that do not describe masculinity, such as weak, soft, and emotional" (Reeser, 2020, 1). Referring to Khar's overpowering and totalitarian attitude towards women, Rajpal Kaur writes:

"If a man is strong, active, controller, violent, woman is the opposite. . . she is considered "queer", "strange", or "other". . . she is made learn that women are by nature calm, meek, docile, passive, under-control and subservient. They are the other side of man. If a man is strong, active, a controller, violent, a woman is the opposite" (Kaur, 2016, 516).

Rajpal regards the traditional feudal system as the cause of women's weakness and submissiveness in that she is ready to obey their men in every relational role. *Lord* illustrates how Sherry, Safia and his other wives of Khar are in his command. They read what Khar suggests them to read and they wear what he tells them to wear (*Lord*, 1995, 150), giving way to deflection in the viewpoints of both the genders in every aspect of life.

Chris Weedon in *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist* refers patriarchy to "power relations in which women's interest are subordinated to the interests of men" (Sara, 2001, 3). Khar's patriarchy has downtrodden and subjugated the plight of women, epitomizing a patriarch and oppressor with discourtesy, multiplying to a rowdy man. The narrative provides evidence of the concrete picture of women on one side, while on the other; it reveals the influence of patriarchy, holding a mirror to longstanding deep-rooted patriarchal traditions and traces a journey of suppression and destruction of women which was unacceptable to her, resulting in a rebellion subsequently escalating a clash between them.

Durrani affirms that her clash was deeply rooted in the early span of her life where she was kept at a distance from the masculine gender and unaware of men other than blood relatives. All males were like aliens to her from the very childhood. Pasting clicks from her childhood, she writes "My childhood was encumbered by a lengthy list of don'ts, all designed to maintain an inviolate distance between myself and the masculine world" (*Lord*, 1995, 13). Arguably, distance creates unawareness and doubts, resulting in gender dichotomy between them. Durrani recounts the painful plight of thoughts that there "was no question of discovering oneself. Identity and individuality were crushed. Personality failed to develop" and that her "mind became a sanctuary for secret thoughts of escaping from [her husband's] household. But for that, there was no other goal in life but marriage" (*Lord*, 1995, 14).

Women's identity, individual will and personality development is bulldozed while Men's Personality identity and individuality is boosted up to the mark. In Pakistani society such scenario brings a dichotomy and rebellion because where there is power there will be resistance

Rejecting the traditionalist thoughts of her family she exposes that:

"My father's conservative family worried that I would be left a spinster. At seventeen, I should have been engaged. This was the worst humiliation for a Pakistani woman. My father's family was even more averse to my coloring than my mother's family" (*Lord*, 1995, 17).

A woman with murky skin is not entitled for marriage and would be left spinster. Men look for fairer-skinned ladies to marry and reject the darker one. Such an attitude towards women with dark skin leads to racism. Whether a man is fair or not, it doesn't matter, but women should be fairer as a fair daughter will give birth to a fair child. Similarly, for a man's age doesn't matter but for a woman one feels fearful that she will be left spinster if she didn't marry at early ages. Explicating the real essence of religion and resisting so-called Mormons Durrani writes:

"A woman was like a man's land - The Koran says so,' he said. This was a revealing simile. A feudal lord loves his land only in functional terms. He encloses it and protects it. If it is barren, he neglects it. Land is power, prestige and property. I interpreted the Koran differently. To me, land had to be tended and cultivated; only then could it produce in abundance. Otherwise, it would be barren" (*Lord*, 1995, 81).

Aforementioned lines depict a rigid dichotomy between Khar and Durrani based upon religious views and uses religion as a weapon to suppress, subjugate the weaker sex. Referring to the Quran, men believes women to be their commodity and property, only useful when it is productive. Contradicting Khar's Philosophy Durrani believes that the same land or property should be kept fertile and productive; otherwise no one will get the benefit out of it but Alas! She has to accept what the lord interprets as he is righteous and pious. Hira Arain shares the same thought in her article by saying that women are used as a commodity and a property to be loved and used only when they are functional (Hira, 2016, 704). Durrani further recounts:

"The patriarchs were venerated as holy men, who spoke with Allah. And, indeed, at some earlier time many were pious and righteous . . . had the authority to justify their every deed on the basis of their own, quite convenient, interpretation of the Koran. A feudal lord was an absolute ruler who could justify any action" (*Lord*, 1995, 23-24).

Slavery of women is not only physical but also psychological. So completely has the woman been brain washed by the social and familial forces that she accepts unquestionably all the torture indignity and misery heaped on her that she realizes herself to be a marginal being inferior to the lord or master. As Nusrat Chowdhary advocates that "she had screamed out her personal inconsistency and psychosomatic tussle and talked about dogmatic and ethical teachings of Pakistani society" (Nusrat, 2017, 25). Here men psychology has been opposed, her preliminary character of a robotic child and now of an honor bound wife exerted extreme influence on her mind; she could not think what was right and what was wrong for her. Khar spies on her all the time. Confining her freedom of thought, Khar says "You dare not think of anything that I have forbidden you to think about" (*Lord*, 1995, 108). Highlighting the psychosomatic tussle between Durrani and her spouse she claims that:

"His philosophies were eclectic. He kept me suppressed and cloistered, but then again he treated me as a companion. He discussed politics with me and expected me to take an active interest in his work. I was like a wall on which he could bounce off ideas, but I was expected to bounce them true, rather than attempt to deflect them in any way" (*Lord*, 1995, 81).

A Clash rises when there is a psychological confusion and that can be seen invariably in the narrative. Recounting such recurring confusions in Durrani's mind about Khar, she implores that, "[w]hich Mustafa should I believe?" (*Lord*, 1995, 284). Both differ in their psychological mindset Durrani's psychology demanded freedom, breaking the violence, suppression and subjugation (western and rebellious) while Khar's philosophies were mixed. At a certain point an oppressor becomes a good husband (traditional and feudalistic). Such diverging psychological views have been challenged in *Lord*.

Men are allowed to betray their wives and are not considered a supreme sin, but a wife to betray him is a supreme sin. They are allowed to oppress and abuse their wives the way Khar did to “Wazir, Firdaus, Safia, Naubahar and Shahrazad (Sherry)”. Resisting such men’s domination Durrani writes that:

“It did not matter that Mustafa had ruined Safia’s life, that he had also married Naubahar and ruined her life, that he had visited Safia for mere hours in the course of their seven-year marriage, that he did not love her. “Feudal law allows a man to act in such a manner, but for a wife to betray a husband is the supreme sin” (Lord, 1995, 32).

Highlighting the conventional hypocrisy of the feudal aristocracy, Lord recounts incidents where Khar on one hand remarks about “women who have affairs with married men” as “sluts” (Lord, 1995, 56) whereas he himself has illicit relationships with his wife’s sister and several other women, legitimizing all the illegitimate things for himself. Emotional grudge can be captured here when she came to know Anees claim to get all the possessions after the divorce, despite he was in love he came up with speedy recovery from the incident as She writes “I thought how little it took to make some men heal” (Lord, 1995, 61), while Durrani is still stuck with her guilt. Women have to face much more difficulties as compare to men. Men can forget everything, but a woman takes a lot of time to get out of the time spent with him. Similarly, how easy it had always been for men to erase the mess he created for them. A single apology is enough, but they forget that their mess has heaped Woman Heart; Khar has gained back again everything, his position and wealth while she lost her children, wealth. Reminding her distressed lifespan she writes:

“He had regained his wealth and his political position was stronger than ever. I had lost everything - even the children. I walked through the corridors of my former home and realized how completely he had stripped me. This was the difference between man and woman” (Lord, 1995, 311).

A widow is seen as a disgusting creature, free women and a slut. You will never stop loose tongues from wiggling for a widow while you will not see any loose tongue shaking for a widower. Explaining an emerging clash in the views of men and women, Durrani writes that “A divorcee in Pakistani society is always a prime target for malicious gossip. Wagging tongues and leering glances turned me into a recluse” (Lord, 1995, 61-62). Here fingers were pointed towards a widow but not a widower.

Most of the men in our society use women’s first marriage or affair to torture them. Men believe that not marrying the same person or remarriage is adultery. To Durrani, it “was a feudal hang-up: his class believed that a woman was an instrument of a man’s carnal pleasure. If the woman ever indicated that she felt pleasure, she was a potential adulteress, not to be trusted” (Lord, 1995, 80).

Here, men consider women to be creatures made for the pleasure of men only. They believe she is not to be trusted if she herself felt pleasure in it. A man is allowed to take pleasure; he is not accused of adultery no matter how many times they marry because feudal traditions leaves women only when she is in the coffin, as she said:

“I dreamed of release, but reality stood in front of me like a stone wall. Divorce was just not possible.

British and Pakistani law might be on my side, but in the feudal world, a man retains control of his daughter, and I knew that Mustafa would use her as a hostage to assure my loyalty” (Lord, 1995, 112).

To her, escape was impossible because of those feudal traditions where a man is only controller and everything to women. Dichotomy emerges as Mustafa’s reasons for marriage were always erroneous which pedestals on practicality and transit rather than affections and adore, while she believes the real bottom of marriage is the trust and respect, husband and wife has for each other, she recalls “I began to understand that the core of marriage is not necessarily fidelity; it is trust and respect” (Lord, 1995, 181).

Withstanding her spouse’s oppressive behavior, Durrani rebuts enduringly: “If you are Mr. Khar, I am Mrs. Khar. If you learned from Mr Bhutto, I have learned from you. If you blackmail me, I’ll blackmail you. I will face up to the situation and fight you just as you are fighting me. I will not let you get away with it” (Lord, 1995, 199).

In our society, women are represented through either their husbands, or fathers and brothers because they were considered as their controller and authoritarians. Durrani is against this tradition of being remembered in the name of a man. She believes one should be remembered through her own personality and identity. A woman should not step into the shoes of her father or husband as she says:

“Asia in general and the subcontinent in particular have produced valiant women who have taken up the unfinished struggle of their men-folk. In most cases, their entry into politics began because of adversity and violence. Indira Gandhi, Cory Aquino, Benazir Bhutto and others stepped into the shoes of their fathers or husbands. Only when Mustafa was imprisoned did I emerge” (Lord, 1995, 212 .213).

Men do expects from woman, a love with the same intensity after a course of humiliation, physical violence and mental torture the way she had loved him earlier which was in Tehmina’s mind impossible for a woman because she is physically, mentally and emotionally broken and degraded up to the core that his every single crime heaped in her heart and she is unable to love him. Here a woman is unable to fulfill men’s expectation that shows how much

emotional dichotomy has been developed. In such situation, she reminds of the heart touching words of Faiz Ahmad Faiz

Do not ask me for the same intensity
With which I loved you once . . .
I turn; I turn again and again to the pain.
You are still beautiful, so beautiful –
But - the pain (Lord, 1995, 240).

Conclusion

Durrani is read as a critique of the prevalent system. Grounding its argument on the notions of feminism, gender dichotomy and women oppression, the study has unveiled the diverging outlooks between masculinity and femininity in the *Lord*, which stands on the notion of religion, culture, society, gender, identity, and individuality. Durrani has disclosed these notions, which are used as a tool to subjugate women behind the four walls. Throughout the narrative, the probe marked out the incongruity of masculine and feminine gender under conflicting blows of spouses in a troubled marital bond. Joining hands in hands with Durrani *Lord*, this dissertation has boldly spotlighted the surging dichotomy between husband and wife, man and women in general, where the oppressor does not bear the oppressed to get dominated as a larger fraction of our globe lays emphasis on the dominance of men over women. Durrani always refused to accept her inhibition from Khar and his stiff frame of mind. Present research divulged male obsessions, victimization, and emotional suppression toward the female body and defied feminine exploitation through cultural norms and the manipulation of religion. The feminine stature is thus chucked into an emotional melee to carry out the male-tilted racially heaved duties disguised as diffidence and compliance. The main concern of this study was to expose the deflecting conception of man and masculinity who disregard all decrees and traditions that put them in the same print and raid their fundamental right and prospects assigned to women and femininity. Durrani did the same by highlighting men and women at odds in their mental, emotional, socio-cultural, and religious views of the *Lord*; as De Beauvoir says, “All oppression creates a state of war” (*The Second Sex*, 2010, 849)

References

- Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam. *Umm Ul Kitab* (Urdu), Lahore: Makki Dar ul Kutub, 1990 Durrani, Tehmina. *Blasphemy*, Lahore: Feroz Sons (Pvt.)Ltd. 1998
- Durrani, Tehmina. *My Feudal Lord*, London: Corgi edition, 1995
- Arain, Hira. (Apr-Jun 2016). Alienation of Women in Capitalist Society: A Critique on Tehmina’s “My Feudal Lord” From Feministic Persoective: Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL), Vol.4.Issue 2. (702-705)
- Chowdhary, Nusrat. (July 2017). Rising above the Social Milieu: A Study of Tehmina Durrani’s Autobiography My Feudal Lord: Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal Vol. 6, Issue-IV. (024-029)
- De Beauvoir, Simone. (2010). *The Second Sex*: United States, Vintage Books.
- Gamble, Sarah. (2001). *Early Feminism*, Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism: Stephanie Hodgson-Wright. London, Routledge, (3-14).
- Gamble, Sarah. (2001). *First Wave Feminism*, Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism: Valerie Sanders. London, Routledge. (15-24).
- Gamble, Sarah. (2001). *Second Wave Feminism*, Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism: Sue Thornham. London, Routledge. (25-35).
- Gamble, Sarah. (2001). *Feminism and Gender*, Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism: Sophia Phoca. London, Routledge. (46-53).
- Gardiner, Judith Kegan. 2002. Introduction. *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory: New Directions*. Judith Kegan Gardiner. New York, Columbia University Press. (1-29).
- James, Christine A. (1997). *Feminism and Masculinity: Reconceptualizing the Dichotomy of Reason and Emotion*. International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy: Volume 17. (129-152)

- Kaur, Rajpal. (January 2016). Speaking from the Margins: Tehmina Durrani's My Feudal Lord: Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL), vol.4.Issue 1. (514-519)
- M. Brown, Ashley and J. Ismail Khaled. (2019). Feminist Theorizing Of Men and Masculinity: Applying Feminist Perspectives to Advance College Men and Masculinities Praxis. Thresholds Volume 42, Issue No 1. (17-35)
- McDowell, Linda and Sharp, Joanne P. (1997) Joanne P. Gender as a Structure of Social Practice' Space, Gender, Knowledge Feminist Readings: R.W.Connell. Arnold. (44-53).
- McDowell, Linda. (1999).Introduction: Place and Gender. Gender Identity and Place; Understanding Feminist Geographies: Policy Press & Blackwell Publishers Ltd. (1-33).
- Tahir, Nouman & Rasool, Syed Hanif. (Jan-June 2020). Politics of Religion in Tehmina Durrani's Blasphemy: University of Chitral Journal of Linguistics & Literature, Vol.4, Issue 01, 2021
- Reeser, Todd W. (2010). Introduction: The Study of Masculinity. Masculinities in Theory: An Introduction Blackwell Publishing. (1-16)
- Zubair, Hassan Bin, Aslam, Fahmida and Khawaja, Mashooq Ali. (July-December 2108). Analysis of Patriarchal Pressures and the Struggle of a Pakistani Woman in My Feudal Lord: Grassroots, Vol.52, No II. (111-122)



@ 2023 by the author. Licensee University of Chitral, Journal of Linguistics & Literature, Pakistan. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).