



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

Feminist Interventions in Motherhood Discourse: A Comparative Study of *Moth Smoke* and *The Joys of Motherhood* from a Radical Feminist Perspective

¹Muneeba Mughal, ²Shafique Ahmed Mahar, ³Irfan Ali, ⁴Fozia Mahar

¹Teaching Assistant (English Literature) Linguistics and Social Sciences, Begum Nusrat Bhutto Women University, Sukkur, Pakistan

²M.Phil. Scholar (English Linguistics) Hamdard University Karachi, Pakistan

³English Subject Specialist, School Education and Literacy Department Sindh, Pakistan

⁴Teaching Assistant (English Linguistics) Linguistics and Social Sciences, Begum Nusrat Bhutto Women University, Sukkur, Pakistan

Article Info

Corresponding Author: M. Mughal
Muneeba.mughal.ta@bnbwu.edu.pk

Abstract

The research paper examines a comparative study of the feminist interventions in motherhood discourses, such as Hamid's "Moth Smoke" (2000) and Bauchi Emecheta's "The Joys of Motherhood" (1979) through textual analysis. The analysis is conducted through the lens of De Beauvoir's (1949) Radical Feminist perspective. Writings for women are the emergency need to strengthen and empower women as mothers, wives, and daughters; hence the current study helps to examine Pakistani and African fiction writings from two different societies, cultures, nations, and countries respectively. The main objective of the study is to analyze women's status as mothers in the Ibo and Pakistani society through the lens of Radical Feminism. The research study is based on a non-empirical method which is useful for identifying and analyzing themes and patterns in existing research and the findings are controlled by theoretical exploration (Saunders, 2019). The study follows a comparative analysis of the selected texts; the comparative research design is utilized to analyze the similarities and dissimilarities of the original texts (Caramani, 2009). Finally, the study concludes on the self-scarifying attitude of the mother, its loneliness, its otherness, and marital affair, however, the oppression and brutality faced by mothers in the patriarchal culture of Africa and Pakistan are also highlighted. Additionally, the social and cultural insignificance and inequalities experienced by motherhood in both Societies. The study provides insights into solving motherhood problems and offers suggestions for improving the living standard of motherhood in two comparatively different societies.

Keywords:

Motherhood,
Radical feminism,
Moth Smoke,
The Joys of Motherhood,
Comparative study,
African Ibo society,
Pakistani society

Introduction

The status of Motherhood is respectable itself; throughout the world, it is recognizable as the most prestigious position women can have. To achieve this position a woman suffers many hardships and faces many challenges. According to Oyeronke Oyewumi (2003), "A woman gives birth to a child and two entities are taking place a new life, a baby and she herself". Generally, in every society, culture, nation, and country, a woman's

position is changed by motherhood, her identity, her respect, and her security are solely based on motherhood. G.E. Okere (1994) is of the view that motherhood is an attainment of the peak of the rites into womanhood. Moreover, the idea of motherhood is to reveal the self-sacrificing, creator, provider, bearer, and heaven-like creature. Most specifically, African and Pakistani motherhood emphasizes self-sacrificing which is derived from religious practices.

Many writers from Pakistan glorify motherhood in their works, likewise, Bepsi Sidwa, Mohsin Hamid, Khalid Hussaini, Alif Shafak, and other Muslim writers hunting on women's status as motherhood and motherhood experience in a third-world country, although depicted in their fictional creation. They highlight the critical scenario of motherhood which is either deprived motherhood, forced motherhood, or choice motherhood. Besides, African motherhood is exaggeratedly used in fictional writings by Nigerian writers like Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, Chinua Achebe, and many others. In the Ibo society where the mother is only recognizable through motherhood, her joys, her essence, and her breath are only related to her motherhood. If she denies motherhood means she refuses her existence. Moreover, society's beliefs in male births add value to a woman's life.

Consequently, the research paper aims to provide a comparative study representing motherhood between two different polls, peculiarly, Africa and Pakistan, the interpretation and evaluation of the findings are based on the Radical feministic perspective of De Beauvoir, which is a concept in the stream of feminism where De Beauvoir writes in her book *The Second Sex* (1949), her ideas challenging the patriarchal mindset societies and oppressive and brutal world of man where women suffer the same in sexually, biologically, and gender-based. In *Moth Smoke*, the protagonist, Daru, becomes a surrogate mother to his friend's son, emphasizing non-traditional forms of motherhood. Hence, Daru's journey shows the difficulties and struggles that come with motherhood. While, *The Joys of Motherhood* shows traditional standards through the protagonist, Nnu Ego, she finds strength and purpose in her role as a mother, despite facing hardships and struggles. The writers are socially, culturally, and geographically different what makes them compare is the status of women as motherhood is the significant stance of this research paper, whereas social and cultural insignificance and inequalities faced by motherhood are comparatively highlighted in both texts.

Problem statement

Women's writings are the emergency need to strengthen and empower the status of women in a mother world widely. In this regard, the research problem of the present study is to comparatively investigate the status of women as mothers in fictional writings of Africa and Pakistan, and how the writers portray the experience of motherhood in the oppressive world of Ibo society and Pakistani society respectively. The study further examines the social and cultural insignificance and inequalities faced by motherhood in the light of De Beauvoir's radical feministic perspective. The study concludes on solving the motherhood problems and provides suggestions on improving the living standard of motherhood in two different polls.

Research Objectives

The core objective of the present study is twofold:

- 1) To analyze the feminist interventions in motherhood discourses, African and Pakistani fiction in the light of De Beauvoir's Radical Feminism.
- 2) To examine the similarities and dissimilarities of the social and cultural insignificance and inequalities confronted by motherhood in the Ibo society and Pakistani society.

Research Questions

The research questions are as:

- 1) What are the feminist interventions in motherhood discourses, such as the status of women as a mothers in African and Pakistani fiction?
- 2) What are the similarities and dissimilarities of the social and cultural insignificance and inequalities experienced by motherhood in *Moth Smoke* and *The Joys of Motherhood*?

Significance of the Study

The uniqueness of the study is to comparatively explore and analyze the feminist interventions in motherhood discourses, and the status of women as a mother from two different polls, African Ibo society and Pakistani society from a Radical feministic perspective. Previously, many different writers from Africa and Pakistan have done their profound work on African motherhood and Pakistani motherhood separately; therefore the research

paper contributes a comparative study of motherhood and provides a new representation. Further, it helps to target only fictional characters of African Ibo society and Pakistani society used by various writers in their novels and after comparison, it also provides some solutions to improve mothers' living standards in both these societies, Africa and Pakistan.

Literature Review

Motherhood refers to a complex and multifaceted experience that can be shaped by various factors like culture, society, and personal experiences. According to Leskoske 2011, asserts that motherhood has a direct proportion to being a woman, only motherhood can justify her gender as a woman, without motherhood she represents something completely different. Asma A. Sheikh and Aqsa Chudury (2021) critically express the severe experience of motherhood, as their article directs the mothering experiences about honor-shame and life trajectories in a patriarchal culture which is represented in five different novels of Pakistani society written by Muslim writers, likewise Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* (1983), Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke* (2000), Khalid Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), Shafak's *Honor* (2011) and *10 Minute 38 Seconds in this Strange World* (2019).

Hence the main focus of their study is on how the patriarchal mindset exploits the life, body, and identity of a mother, and how females resist and challenge honor shame in a male-dominated society. Moreover, the study shows that female characters feel alienated from themselves, and abandoning and harming their children as honor shame forces them into severe depression and anxiety, as a result, the researcher addresses the pathetic psychological and physical suffering of both mother and children. The study provides Beauvoir's (1949) and Chodorow's (1978) insights as a theoretical construct for further proceeding.

According to Sabina Rehman, the Pakistani writer Mohsin Hamid shows in his novel *Moth Smoke* (2000) how the fictional character Mumtaz responds to her role as a wife and mother. The study objectives are threefold, the first part reflects the role of the mother in a Muslim historical allegory, and secondly, how the female character tries to set herself free from the boundaries of social construction and the role assigned and resisted by predetermined gender roles. Moreover, the study further proceeds how Mumtaz defies the walls of a gender-specific identity. About Zia Ahmed, this fictional character is entirely dissatisfied with her husband, Ozi, because of his social and sexual behavior: Mumtaz got changed because of his neglect cause of much awkwardness in the social and sexual behavior of Mumtaz cannot be other than her dissatisfaction because of the neglect of her husband' (Zia Ahmed, 2009, p. 97).

A female author Dr. Syed Hajira Begum presents in her article about African motherhood from a male writer's perspective, it expresses how male writers perpetuate that African mothers in male-dominated culture could achieve happiness and honor only by achieving the status of motherhood and marriage. Her study further proceeds to investigate different fictional characters of Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, and Chinua Achebe's novels and also the works of third-generation writers likewise Semi Ata, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, etc. Syed Hajira concludes the point that African Women need a new African consciousness from female solidarity by awakening an entirely changed mindset of the writers, either male or female to be objective and liberal in their approaches. The glorification of motherhood through male writing is not a sufficient paradigm shift, as African fiction is entirely concerned with motherhood and womanhood so the idea of "African Mother" should not be disconnected from the harsh sufferings of the mother rather it only portrays the nurturing and caring aspects of women's personality.

One of the contemporary studies on third-world women's experiences is explored by the same writer Dr. Syed Hajira, her study she did a comparative study of the third world of African Women and Indian Women her study mainly focuses on fictional characters that share parallel experiences between women's oppression originally from colonization and primarily from a male-dominated society. Further, the illustration proceeds to third world countries how female conditions and oppression framed the world widely. She emphasizes the vivid efforts of women writers in tracing the patriarchal culture in both Africa and India and secondly, her study provides the possibilities of liberating women's future from hegemonic power from a third-world perspective. Lastly, she concludes that third-world writers have shifted from the traditional conflicting mindset of female characters to the newly defined womanhood and motherhood.

In 2017, a research scholar Trashna Devi asserts the treatment of motherhood in African literature, motherhood starts by giving birth to a child and nurturing a newborn life, but this study represents how motherhood

can differ from culture to culture. More specifically, African motherhood is supposed to scare and a powerful spiritual devotion beside an evil attribute. It is also clear through African literature that only the position of motherhood can provide a woman status in society, having children especially male children the recognition of her own identity and it also creates some limitations of being a mother. However, the research interprets motherhood in both institutes, from a feminist perspective.

Riva R. Ramsha M. (2021) explores in their article on the Joys of Motherhood that contemporary African fiction does not mean to emphasize the male-dominated society but also the quest for identity. The representation of post-colonialism is the emergency need of exploring women's writings. In this regard, Buchi Emecheta calls for the change to define and redefine Women's identity under African identity. She has fearlessly described the life limitations and conditions of African women through her female strong character. The researchers share their views on the joys of motherhood and the female character Nnu Ego's shackled identity in the patriarchal Ibo culture of Nigeria and also highlight being a woman to face African colonization. Marie A. Umeh asserts that The Joys of Motherhood is a depiction of female victimization and enslavement of the so-called traditional Ibo culture. The researcher concludes that the heroines of African fiction encourage daring a dream and vision of life, they should aim to be the best at whatever they do and this new awakening brings justice to all women.

One of the feminist Nigerian writers Ngugi wa Thiongo represents the life drastic life of black people, specifically, he represents African Women's lives in a postcolonial setting and claims that colonialism is the prime oppression of African womanhood. Besides, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie represents primarily female characters and the novels are told from female perspectives, only African female oppression is narrated throughout the novels in a postcolonial setting. To conclude Eren Bolat successfully exposes the conditions of postcolonial women and is supposed to create awareness about why women are again positioned in a framed figure.

Above mentioned studies have profoundly contributed to the field of research, whereas the current study provides new insight into the field of comparative studies, Hamid's *Moth Smoke* and Emecheta's *The Joys of Mother* are comparative analyses from the angle of motherhood in the light of De Beauvoir Radical Feministic perspective. Therefore the focus is on the status of women as mothers, motherhood experiences, and social and cultural insignificance of motherhood in Ibo society and Pakistani society, hence none of the writers have comparative studies on both the selected novels from the lenses of Radical feminism theory.

Research Methodology

Non-Empirical Method

The research study utilizes a non-empirical approach that relies on theoretical aspects of the research and draws personal observation, reflection on current events, and/or the authority or experience of the author (Dan, 2018). A comparative method is used to analyze two fictional texts, one from British-Pakistani writer Mohsin Hamid and the other from African Nigerian writer Buche Emecheta, *Moth Smoke* and *The Joys of Motherhood* respectively. De Beauvoir's ideas on Radical feminism (1949) serve as a theoretical framework for this study. As a part of this study, the textual analysis technique is used to analyze the objectives and research questions of the study based on the status of women as mothers and the overall exploration of motherhood in both societies.

Comparative Research Design

The paper has offered a comparative research design to compare and interpret the texts of two different novels from two different writers, nations, and countries for mapping out conclusions. Comparative research helps to find out either similarities or dissimilarities (Caramani, 2009). The study mainly focuses on the similarities and dissimilarities of Hamid's *Moth Smoke* and Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* by incorporating references from Radical Feminism. The researchers have interpreted the original texts of both novels for the representation of Motherhood in different societies.

Theoretical Framework

Women's writings are the prime need for improving the living conditions of women's world, where men's brutality and oppression of women can be seen to a large extent. Radical Feminism emerged in the aftermath of the 1960s which offers to address the global key issues of patriarchal societies and male oppression of females hence it is a significant concept of feminism theory. Essentially, it is by and for women and this theory discusses some

important concepts of sexual oppression as the primary oppression of women. Here the most influential and prominent feminist theorist ideas are considered, Simone De Beauvoir (1908-1986), elaborates the Women's conditions in her most profound work, *The Second Sex* (1949). This important concept portrays the fact that how man supposes himself superior to that woman and how he rules his brutality and manhood over womanhood, in all ages, a woman is undoubtedly considered an object, and also woman's existence is nothing more- than that of sexual relief. Radical feminism is a severe rejection of the patriarchal culture that is based on women's private lives focused on marriage, children, and the household. The key concepts of Simone de Beauvoir are biology, sex/gender roles, patriarchal practices, power holders, dominant culture, and hierarchal system. She describes in her book "One is not born, rather becomes, a Woman" (Newyork: Vintage books, 1973, 301). Most significantly, De Beauviour's view on motherhood is that " being a mother is the realization of achieving physiological destiny, motherhood is her natural vocation, although her whole organism is directed towards the preservation of the species" (Beauviour, 1949, p. 597). Although the patriarchal oppression, male-dominated culture, and social expectations from women die the joys of motherhood, it is a challenging experience for a woman to be a mother and controlled and derived by male desires.

Consequently, women have trouble relationships with their children in these life trajectories, which further drive fear, anger, resentment, and revenge. Regarding this, Beauviour is of the view that: "For a child, it's a great risk that the mother to whom he dedicates his world, is tied or bound is an unfulfilled woman, socially she is inferior to man, sexually she is tired or unsatisfied, she has nothing to do with future or no hold on it, she has just tried to compensate for her frustration through her children" (Beauviour, 1949, p. 632). Both novels are treated with a Radical feministic perspective to represent women as mothers in Ibo society and Pakistani society. Simone de Beauvoir's theoretical framework of radical feminism is used to interpret motherhood which argues that femininity and domesticity are not naturally constructed rather it is socially constructed for motherhood. Hence, there is no limitation on women's freedom and womanhood in the world.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to a comparative analysis of feminist interventions in motherhood discourses, and the status of women as a mother from two different polls, African Ibo society and Pakistani society from the perspective of Radical feminism. The study further delimited to highlight the self-scarifying attitude toward motherhood and the oppression and brutality confronted by mothers in the patriarchal cultures of Africa and Pakistan. The study also served insights into solving motherhood problems and offers suggestions for improving the living standards of motherhood in two comparatively different societies

Data Analysis

Motherhood gained an utmost position in every culture, society, and nation, in particular, Pakistani and Ibo societies the comparative analysis has drawn. In Pakistani fictional works, the status of motherhood portrays an important position of womanhood.

Representation of Motherhood in Hamid's *Moth Smoke*

Hamid's *Moth Smoke* represents a new insight into feminist interventions in motherhood by his protagonist Mumtaz, she was an independent liberal woman who wanted to fly and remained a free but socially appealed woman. Besides, African fiction represents a clear critique of the treatment of motherhood in the Ibo society. Buche Emecheta depicts the joys of motherhood through Nnu Ego's character that she is a slave to her children and slave to the tradition of Ibo society, therefore the title suggests ironic views on the Representation of Motherhood drastically. This stance further clarifies through African Literature that mothers signify the idea of a woman as a mother in two ways, the first image is Mother Africa and the second image is African femaleness, but the paper analyzes only Mother Africa in the Joys of Motherhood. Whereas, Mohsin Hamid and Emechates's comparative ideas are interpreted in the light of De Beauvoir's Radical Feminism. Both novels independently produce a comprehensive insight into women's status as mothers and all the insignificance and inequality faced by motherhood

Self-Sacrificing and Loneliness

Self-sacrificing is a central determination of motherhood, as in *Moth Smoke* the protagonist Mumtaz narrates: "I realized that how much Ozi wanted this child, and it moved me to carry this child. I then asked him for a week to think over this, then week after week passed and I made no conclusion out of it. I had no control over all

this. I felt guilty and selfish, I tried to convince myself that I owned this child, its nothing wrong with this, although the birth of a child was an expression of female power and it would make our relationship even stronger, as time passed. Finally, we have done a sonogram and then a little flesh is growing and it was too late to turn back" (Hamid, 2000, p. 174). Moth Smoke's chapter on wife and mother depicts Hamid's view through his protagonist that she does not completely agree and is ready to hold the position of the mother but it is imposed by her husband to gain motherhood because he wanted a child. Motherhood is the self-scarifying status a woman ever has, in the novel When Mumtaz asks for an abortion but later on, her essence of motherhood provokes,

"I ask myself that it's a kind of martyrdom of killing a child. I realized to sacrificing myself for something noble for my love, husband, family, and species" After having the position Mumtaz discovered another unknown boredom of motherhood, "I started to get bored and frightened because whenever I looked at the little flesh I had produced I did not feel anything special nor anything, means my son, my little prince, my baby, my one and only: I felt nothing for him, everything becomes empty, neither joy nor happiness, I could only feel nothingness. My heart and mind were filled with crazy silence. The kind that makes you wondering and you are going insane" (Hamid, 2000, p. 176). Mother loneliness can be highly signified in Pakistani fiction, Hamid proclaims the value of motherhood is too important when it comes to producing a child, and society's dependence on women in motherhood, later women's wings of motherhood vanished, likewise, when Mumtaz expresses that, "I was completely neglected, resentful at being alone at home, it was a time when Muazzam was just six month old. I decided to join my work full-time once again and discussed it with Ozi, he became shocked and replied, that Muazzam was too young, I said if he felt so strongly he could ask for paternity leave. But finally, nothing does work and he won the argument with a low blow. And he looked at me like a stranger and asked if I loved our son at all. This unwavering question broke me, I started sobbing and I could not stop" (Hamid, 2000, p. 176). Beauvoir's radical feminist insights address the danger of motherhood is that when a mother thinks like a normal human, "the great risk for the child is that the mother to whom he celebrates the whole is almost the unfulfilled woman: sexually, she is frigid and unsatisfied; socially, she feels inferior to man; almost she has nothing to hold on the world or future; she just try to compensate for the frustration through the child". (Beauvoir, 1949, p. 632)

Motherhood and Otherness

The unknown calamity of motherhood is portrayed in moth smoke when Mumtaz considered herself as the other she asserted, "Neither did I tell Ozi nor he asked me why I had cried. Rather he just hugged me and even though I needed him to, it felt empty. Ozi had found my weak spot he may not understand why but he could realize that he made me do things I did not want to do. Ah, it's such an awful power to give one person in a relationship, I supposed it killed our marriage, I think it would kill anyone's". She finally realized that it was a new experience for her, nothing going to work for her if not motherhood, "I had never ashamed for anything I did in my life, but this was not something I had done. For me, this was not an act but an identity. I disappointed me, shamed me almost. So I hid my secrets as well as I could even from myself". (Hamid, 2000, p. 177)

Mother's False Independence

Another similar stance portrayed by both writers is that the female is concerned with the economy, both are struggling and working financially. In Moth Smoke the Mumtaz was a journalist writer who used to work independently and earn money when she asserts, "I kept writing and glad for the distraction from the constant demands of her son, the income equally mattered to me and the idea of taking pocket money from my husband is a weird thing I can do. Here, I was a little hypocritical about managing financial independence through writing. Well, it's an experience that provided me a sigh of relief in another strange way. The writing was the source that helped me to hide myself by producing my write-up on motherhood. This learning outcome was good enough to repair and grow my new muscles in my back, wing muscles; it was the kind of satisfied learning that you are learning to fly" (Hamid, 2000, p. 178). The above statement gives an insight to the readers that radical feminism is the rejection of all women's traditional concerns that stop women's growth and kill their entity as a human. According to Beauvoir, it's equally important to treat women as a human concerning the brutal patriarchal practice and provide them the room to feel free and fly, indeed they are going to produce a generation from themselves.

Representation of Motherhood in Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*

The experience of motherhood is not different in different cultures, as the concept of motherhood is universal therefore no matter of Pakistani motherhood and African motherhood are involved to a large extent. Although its principle is almost the same, likewise reproductive practices and being oppressed by a male-dominated society, the novel probes the concept of motherhood as many times as women can produce a child she must sustain the continuity, and prove to be the best wife in society

Self-Scarving and Loneliness

Since Emecheta describes motherhood as the oldest and self-sacrificing position in the family whereas Nnu Ego shows disappointment at the condemnation of childlessness in Ibo society. The novel depicts the real picture of trauma faced by Nnu Ego throughout her life as a mother which gives birth to other issues of being oppressed and being a barren woman. Society is an essential part of women's sufferings, pain, and questioning about motherhood, it demands women to produce children and get profound positioning of Motherhood even by producing male Children. Emecheta has shown that the value of women depends on fertility, it is not she is supposed to be a failed woman in Ibo society. The main female protagonist's experience of motherhood in traditional Ibo society is a huge concern of pride whereas she left the society due to her childlessness after her first marriage and started her new life with Nnaife, her second husband, she is not in love with her husband but after all, she thinks that if her husband helps to get the position of motherhood she probably makes love with her, although she has to produce the child and gaining the position of motherhood, kits the ultimate truth of Nnu Egos happiness.

Marriage and Motherhood Give the Public Status to Women

As Nnu Ego underwent ough the trauma of losing her boy baby she was in such a shock that she attempted suicide by jumping into the river but some villagers saved her life. After all, she was able to produce only nine surviving children throughout her life. But at the same time, she faced some economic climates and no political recognition so that she could help to up bring her children into logos. She has faced an unstoppable child reproduction that destroys her inner strength, in this reference Beauvoir considered women oppressed based on sexual and gender roles.

De Beauvoir's (1949) view on motherhood is that it is not naturally constructed but rather its social enforcement that constructs a woman's life. She also mentioned that patriarchal culture is the root cause of every woman's oppressed society. Here her ideas of her are fitted into both the novel about the texts:

Women are facing blunders in third-world countries like Nigeria and Pakistan, almost the same calamity of being mothers made them depend on children and husbands. Whereas none of them supported them in the end, likewise Nnu Ego remained the slave to her children but in the end, was alone when she died the supremacy of motherhood remains under question. In *The Joy of Motherhood*, "her love, affliction, and duty for her children were her chain of slavery" (Emecheta, 1979, p. 186).

The Oppression and Brutality in the Patriarchal Society of Africa and Pakistan

The oppression and brutality of manhood are at their peak in both African and Pakistani fiction, whether it's physical oppression or mental, women have to suffer as daughters, sisters, wives, and at last as mothers. Emecheta confesses that Nnu Ego pauses to assess the injustice of her life in logos: "She felt it was unfair of man cleverly using the women's sense of responsibility to enslave women. Here in logos, where she faced the bitter reality of making ends meet on a pittance was it fine for her husband to refer to responsibility? (Emecheta, 1979, p 8). According to the above statement, it is depicted that women are considered as objects even gaining the position of motherhood, they remain unstable or unfitted in men's brutal world. In this context, Beauviore represents that women are objects of sexual pleasure and fulfill the needs of a man. That is all a woman has to do in every stage of her life.

Another statement of Emecheta highlights the otherness of the woman, "She began to feel unfitted and fatigued and time tied her like a frightened child; yet she walked fast and resentful that she should feel any physical hurt. But when she walked, the pain and anger fought with each other inside her. She tried to tell herself and satisfied herself that this was all soon going to end, very, very quickly. She asked herself why she had punished herself so badly" (Emecheta, 1979, p. 25)

The Joys of Motherhood seem attracted at a distant view, this stance is described by Emecheta in a way: "So the slave woman was realizing that Nnu Ego's life was nothing but a catalog of tragedy and disaster". (Emecheta, 1979, p. 9)

The Social and Cultural insignificance and inequalities faced by Women as Mothers in both societies.

Both Hamid and Emecheta largely try to find out the ways women survive and condition in hard circumstances where their female characters socially and culturally face insignificance as mothers, Emecheta expresses that motherhood is the exchange of idea from imprisons to enslavement, as Nnu Ego can interpret the inequality that exchanges as something that enslaves and imprisons her. As a mother and a wife, she noted the harsh reality of making ends meet on a pittance, that might secures her thralldom.

When she raises the question of raped culture due to patriarchal practices, "She knew why horrible men raped women, just because they are aware of their sufficiency over women. This converts a man into an animal passion. And she was also sure that he had never seen a woman before. She bore it and realized and pretended that he was Amatokwu her husband, her first sweetheart was lying next to her. This man's appetite was voracious", "She felt humiliated but what else was she to do?" (Emecheta, 1979, p. 48). According to De behavior, it's fine to reject the idea of being suppressed by a man as a wife from the husband as a mother to the children, a woman first is a human than the woman.

Emecheta describes that Motherhood is a supreme authority in the Ibo society if the women possess a large number of children, in this regard Nnu Ego suppressed herself with socially and culturally constructed ideas but at last, she suffered as nobody can imagine. The given statement justifies her last stance of unspoken motherhood: "When her children acknowledged her sudden death, they returned to the home, even Oshie. They were all pleased that she had died so earlier than they were stable to provide her with a good life. Her burial was the nosiest burial Ibuza had ever seen (Emecheta, 1979, p. 244). Finally, Nnu Ego was a wicked woman even in death because, Stories afterward, however, said that Nnu Ego was a wicked woman even in death because society appealed to her to make women fertile but she never did so, oh, Poor Nnu Ego had no peace in her death bed, even that day people suggest to the dyed body of Nnu Ego, she should give all to her children. The joy of being motherhood was the joy of giving all to her children.

Emecheta depicts the oppression of motherhood through Ego's Ego statement when she says, "he has never given me anything nor to our children, even he was expecting us to give him something before he left us. Nnaife was beginning to refer to the children only belonging to me, he blamed me for having many children, Nnu Ego cried and there was no answer for her.

For Nnu it was difficult to confess the perfect woman as a mother, she asserted "When will be I free?". (187) She answers herself, "Never, not even on death bed. I am a prisoner of my flesh and body, is it such a fortunate position? Her blaming goes on and on like her joys of motherhood going on. (Emecheta, 1979, p 187)

The Contrast Between *Moth Smoke* and *The Joys of Motherhood*

Class Difference and Motherhood

Along with similarities, the present study finds some contradictory ideas on the representation of motherhood in the Ibo Society and Pakistani Society. Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* and Hamid's *Moth Smoke* explore the class difference effect on motherhood. Likewise, Mumtaz was from the upper class and only had one baby boy, there is no exercise done by Mumtaz to have any children when she asserted, "Muazzam's new nanny was not less than a blessing, for the first time since his birth, he was not completely dependent to me and that is something liberating me. I could not stop myself from thinking about utilizing my time and then what I wanted to do with my life. My twenty-sixth birthday reminded me that I was still alive and young. I tried to remarriage, rediscovered everything that had made me love Ozzi in the first place, but unfortunately, it did not work" (Hamid, 2000, p. 179). Besides, Nnu Ego suppressed herself to produce as many children as even she could not. Her recognition is solely based on her reproducing activity and also baby boy adds more prestigious value to her empty position of motherhood. She faced a financial crisis due to the lower class system.

Motherhood and Marital affair

De Beauvoir highlights women are more human than women. In the novel *Moth Smoke*, the protagonist explores the marital affair with her husband's best friend Daru, being a mother Hamid portrays a humane side of a male character in his novel she thought: "So did I after being a faithful wife and four years of marriage, come to start having sex with my husband's best friend? It all began with writing under a pseudonym. A double life has begun somewhere and my first lie, first deception. Hence It was fantastic. We had a delicious courtship, slow and exquisite

because we both felt so guilty. However Sex was a revelation: "Being touched by another man revealed my independence from the United States of marriage, I felt myself for the very first time. We smoked together and talk long hours and made each other laugh" (Hmaid, 2000, p. 23). Mumtaz's marital affairs depict that the joys of motherhood do not concern being a human, De Beauvoir the same stance represents that women are free in every aspect of their lives. Mumtaz's mother is forced into motherhood that was imposed by her husband not involved in motherhood from her heart. Besides, Nnu Ego did not have any marital affair in this regard Emecheta stands for some dissimilar view from Hamid.

Undoubtedly, motherhood is not as joyful as it seems rather it is a cut experience for Mumtaz and Nun Ego, both were too pleased with motherhood, its socially constructed, this paper sheds the life on whether a woman wants to be free and fly, so the responsibility of a good society is to let her free and fly, independent.

Findings

The main objectives of this research were to know whether Writings for women are the emergency need to strengthen and empower women as mothers, wives, and daughters; hence the current study helps to examine Pakistani and African fiction writings from two different societies, cultures, nations, and countries respectively. uses a comparative research design to analyze texts on motherhood in Africa and Pakistan. It highlights the self-scarifying attitude, loneliness, otherness, and marital affair, as well as the oppression and brutality faced by mothers in both societies.

Comparative Analysis of *Moth Smoke* and *The Joys of Motherhood*

no	Themes	De Beauvoir's Radical Feminism	<i>Moth Smoke</i>	<i>The Joys of Motherhood</i>
1.	Representation of Motherhood	Motherhood is seen as a socially enforced role rather than a natural one, leading to women's oppression.	Mumtaz is an independent, liberal woman pressured into motherhood by her husband.	Nnu Ego is a slave to her children and the traditions of Ibo society.
2.	Self-Sacrificing and Loneliness	Motherhood is self-sacrificing and often leads to loneliness and emotional emptiness.	Mumtaz feels imposed upon by her husband to have a child, leading to feelings of guilt and loneliness.	Nnu Ego faces societal pressure to have children and is disappointed by the condemnation of childlessness.
3.	Motherhood and Otherness	Women are often made to feel like the "other" in their roles as mothers, leading to a loss of personal identity.	Mumtaz feels other and powerless, leading to emotional turmoil and a sense of emptiness.	Nnu Ego feels unfit and fatigued, seeing her life as a catalog of tragedy and disaster.
4.	Mother's False Independence	Women's financial independence is often undermined by their roles as mothers, reinforcing their dependence on men.	Mumtaz tries to maintain financial independence through writing, feeling hypocritical and trapped.	Nnu Ego struggles with economic hardship despite having many children and feeling enslaved by her role as a mother.
5.	Marriage and Motherhood	Marriage and motherhood are intertwined in ways that often oppress	Mumtaz's marriage suffers due to the pressures of motherhood, leading	Nnu Ego's marriage is centered around her ability to produce children, leading to her

		women and limit their freedom.	her to have an affair.	feeling trapped and unfulfilled.
6.	Class Difference and Motherhood	Class differences affect women's experiences of motherhood, with lower-class women facing more severe hardships.	Mumtaz, from the upper class, feels liberated by having a nanny, allowing her some freedom.	Nnu Ego, from a lower class, faces continuous financial struggles and pressure to have more children.
7.	Motherhood and Marital Affair	Women's pursuit of personal fulfillment can conflict with societal expectations of fidelity and motherhood.	Mumtaz engages in an affair, finding a sense of independence and self-discovery outside her marriage.	Nnu Ego does not have any marital affairs, focusing solely on her role as a mother.
8.	Oppression and Brutality	Both novels highlight the various forms of oppression women face in patriarchal societies, reinforcing their subjugation.	Mumtaz feels emotionally and mentally oppressed by societal expectations and her husband's demands.	Nnu Ego faces both physical and emotional oppression, feeling enslaved by societal and familial expectations.
9.	Social and Cultural Inequalities	Social and cultural constructs of motherhood contribute significantly to women's oppression and lack of personal autonomy.	Mumtaz's experiences highlight the social dependence on motherhood and the loss of personal freedom.	Nnu Ego's experiences highlight the cultural pressure to produce children and the resulting oppression.

Table 1 provides the comparative analysis of *Moth Smoke* and *The Joys of Motherhood* from De Beauvoir's Radical Feminism based on two research objectives examined in the data analysis section. To analyze the feminist interventions in motherhood discourses, African and Pakistani fiction in the light of De Beauvoir's Radical Feminism. To examine the similarities and dissimilarities of the social and cultural insignificance and inequalities confronted by motherhood in the Ibo society and Pakistani society.

Conclusion

The present study has concluded a comparative analysis of feminist interventions in motherhood discourses of two postmodern novels, Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke* and Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* in the Light of Radical Feminism. The study provides the theoretical framework of De Beauvoir which discusses the rejection of the patriarchal practices and oppression of women in a male-dominated society. It mainly highlights the experience of motherhood and the place of a woman as a mother. The representation of motherhood from two different Societies, Ibo and Pakistani are comparatively analyzed. In Pakistani and African societies motherhood causes suffering and hurdle in every stage of women's life. Neither Ego nor Mumtaz did enjoy motherhood at the end of their lives. The essence of the joys of motherhood remains a hallmark question on both continents.

Suggestions for Future Researches

Focus on Underrepresented Voices: While "Moth Smoke" and "The Joys of Motherhood" offer significant insights, future researchers should seek out and analyze texts by authors from marginalized or underrepresented communities. This can help highlight diverse maternal experiences and contribute to a more inclusive understanding of feminist motherhood discourse.

Investigate the Influence of Contemporary Feminist Movements: Examine how contemporary feminist movements, such as #MeToo and reproductive justice, influence literary representations of motherhood. This can help trace the impact of current feminist activism on literary production and its discourse on motherhood.

References

- Akram, A., & Jajja, M. A. (2018). The Maternal Dilemma And Nuptial Ordeals In Jodi Picoult's Fiction: The Lens Of Maternal Feminism. *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies*, 17(1), 19-38.
- Akujobi, R. (2011). Motherhood in African literature and culture. *Clweb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 13(1), 2.
- Akung, J. E. (2013). The Western Voice and Feminist Criticism of the Nigerian Novel. *World Journal of English Language*, 3(1), 24.
- Begum, S. H. (2016). Motherhood Paradigm in African Fiction: A Study. *International Educational Scientific Research Journal*, 2, 12.
- Begum, S. H. (2017). Representation of motherhood and womanhood in third world women writing: a comparative study. *World Journal of English Language*, 4 (2), 56.
- Devi, T. (2017). The treatment of motherhood in African culture and literature. *DJ Journal of English Language and Literature*, 2(2), 37-42.
- Emecheta, B. (1979). *The Joys of Motherhood*. New York: Heinemann
- Hamid, M. (2000). *Moth Smoke*. Riverhead Books.
- Kanwal, A. (2018). Apology or no Apology: Indigenous Models of Subjection and Emancipation in Pakistani Anglophone Fiction. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 19(6), 118-131.
- Kaplan, E. A. (2013). *Motherhood and representation: The mother in popular culture and melodrama*. Routledge.
- Khalid, A. (2022). The negotiations of Pakistani mothers' agency with structure: towards a research practice of hearing 'silences' as a strategy. *Gender and Education*, 1-15.
- Naz, B., Shahid, Z., & Irshad, S. (2022). Dynamics of feminism, third world women, culture and Islam: a postcolonial reading of aurat march. *Palarch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 19(1), 7-22.
- Rehman, S. (2019). Walled in Roles: Woman as a wife and mother in Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke* (2000). *Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies: Alam-e-Niswan*, 26(2), 01-17.
- Roy, D. (2019). Illicit Motherhood: Recrafting Postcolonial Feminist Resistance in Edna O'Brien's *The Love Object* and Jhumpa Lahiri's *Hell-Heaven*. *Humanities*, 8(1), 29.
- Sheikh, A. A., Chaudhary, F., & Choudhry, A. (2021). Honor-Shame and Patriarchal Convergences in Selected Modern English Fiction by Muslim Writers. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)*, 41(3), 477-486.
- Siva, R. (2021). "The Joys of Motherhood" of an African Woman: A Mirage. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)*, 12(2), 1167-1169.



@ 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/>).