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# Scrutiny of Subversive Silent Narrative: A Counter-Subaltern Approach in Pakistani-Anglophone Feminist Writings

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*The study aims at shedding light on the subversive silent narrative, in Zaib-un-Nissa Hamidullah's short story 'The Bull and the She-Devil' (1958), using a counter-Subaltern approach to G. C. Spivak's theory. The focal point of this paper is a brief discussion on the narrative of the short story under the lens of Mikhail Bakhtin's (1963) 'Polyphonic Dialogism'. The study rejects the patriarchal mono-perspective of gendered hierarchy in the eastern traditions that disregard the female 'voice' by declaring it 'absent'. The reflection of female voicelessness, in the short fiction, appears to be the Heroine's Agency, which elevates her as a 'Silent Hero' and not a sub-ordinate, or as Spivak calls – A Subaltern. A special interesting case in point, is the exposition of the recovery of the lost female voices of the society as reflected in Hamidullah's narrative, is determined in the research. Thus, the paper focuses on what seems to be a celebration of the dichotomy of gendered narratives, by exploring the literary techniques and devices used by the author. Conclusively, the research entails to Hamidullah's transgression from the established narrative by presenting the subversiveness of the Female Voice.*

**Key Words:** Subversion, Silence, Counter-Subaltern, Dialogism, Female Agency

## Introduction

This paper scrutinizes ‘Silence’ of the female protagonist in *The Bull and The She-Devil* (1958) by Zaib-un-Nissa Hamidullah, predominantly in the light of Mikhail Bakhtin’s polyphonic dialogism (1963) and in contrast to Spivak’s claim of Subaltern being mute (“Can the Subaltern Speak?”). It highlights the erroneous one-dimensional interpretation of Silence in literature as something that makes the individuals ‘voiceless’. This voicelessness is different from that of Spivak’s ‘Subalterns’, as this silence entails the heroine’s agency to remain silent along with the recognition of the ‘female subject-status’. In the short story, Hamidullah presents a subversive scrutinization of female consciousness of self-identity, liberating the female protagonist Shireen from the shackles of patriarchal societal norms. It is worth pausing to consider the author’s deliberate attempt to present the previously under-presented idea of a ‘Silent Hero’ mastering her own fate through subversive ideology of Silent Feminism. In newer sense, the Anti-essentialist-conception in the narrative deplors the shattering conspiracy of silence, not as ‘the inability to speak’ but as a liberating factor and a silent narrative of its own.

Silence is considered as complete absence of sound or conversation. On the other hand, Max Picard (1964) states, “Silence can exist without speech, but speech cannot exist without silence” (*The World of Silence* 28). Picard declares silence as an essential element of speech. In the primary text, the female protagonist Shireen adopts silence as her fundamental tool to protect herself from the harsh words and behaviour of her husband. In literary discourse, the silent narrative is the absence of dialogue or conversation. Bodil H. Blix (2021) considers silence as “an integral part of narrative enquiry” (“Considering Silences in Narrative Enquiry: An Intergenerational Story of A Sami Family” 580). Blix asserts that silences cannot be avoided in narratives. In retrospect, the text presents silence creating miscommunication and misapprehension of perspectives. Blix further states the use of silence in narratives as it is, “shaped by systemic racism, by abuses of power and privilege” (“Considering Silences in Narrative Enquiry: An Intergenerational Story of A Sami Family” 582). Blix presumes silence as the embodiment of power and strength negating the weakness generally associated with silent characters like Shireen in *The Bull and the She-Devil* (1958). Shireen’s husband Ghulam Qadir misconceives her silence which brings tragic end to the story.

The research deals with the scrutiny of the silent female narrative in Hamidullah’s *The Bull and the She-Devil* (1958), not in terms of gendered subjugation but as emancipation of the female voice. Jean-Francois Lyotard

(1985) states, “In language game...one speaks only inasmuch as one listens, that is, one speaks as a listener”(Just Gaming 72). Lyotard is convinced that the speaker speaks according to the listener. It may depend upon the interest of the listener how much he allows the other person to speak. Here the listener may be interpreted as a reader who may mould the interest of the writer according to his own perspective. Barthes (‘The Death of an Author’, 1977) also demonstrated the death of the author which leads to the birth of the reader (42-48). In Hamidullah’s narrative, the silence actually converses with the reader by means of the absence of dialogue the ‘lack’ of conversation is one form of talk. Contrary to Spivak’s Subaltern theory where she emphasizes, “Subaltern cannot speak” (104), the research entails the aforementioned absence of conversation not as a ‘lack’ of perspective but as resistance to patriarchal monologism. In the narrative there are only monologues of Ghulam Qadir or the commentary of themisogyny-biased narrator, whereas Shireen does not utter a single word in response to societal subjugation, suppressing the female voice, by accepting this female servitude. In other words, Silence is used as a narrative technique to show the passive positioning of the female subject, along with the paradox of silence as a protest without resistance and she appears as the dominant character controlling everyone with her silence.

Carla Kaplan (1996), a radical feminist, in *The Erotics of Talk: Women’s Writings and Feminist Paradigms*, provides an alternate enquiry of Silence which renders it as a source of women representation and meditation(3-19). Kaplan’s emancipatory analytical approach in treating aforementioned recurring modern feature of women writing, silence of women, provides adequate reference in the critical analysis of *The Bull and the She-Devil*(1958). In the light of Kaplan’s analysis of silence, it can be said that the story of the primary text is in search of an “Ideal Listener” who is able to hear the silent narrative of the female protagonist, Shireen. For Kaplan (1996), the silence or absence of dialogue makes her sit on the higher ground. Shireen’s position in her house changes gradually. In the beginning of the story she appears passive but later as Kaplan asserts that her silence makes her sit on the higher grounds means her social position gets better which agonizes her husband. Furthermore, Shireen’s only self-defence mechanism is her silence against her husband, Ghulam Qadir’s discursive desires; his intense desire for her affection with such rampancy turns him into an uncouth beast which is more unruly than the Bull itself. The story’s exposition nudges in the direction of his unquenched desires when Ghulam Qadir drinks water and tells himself that it “cooled me from the outside, but not from the inside. Not from the inside” (Hamidullah 100).

Qadir realizes the need to accomplish his internal desires and describes them in the afore-given metaphorized manner to express his frustration. His egoistic nature subdues his desire to exchange words or have romantic talks with his wife and he remains thirsty which leads to the tragic end of the story.

### **Discussion:**

As the story is set in the conservative rural area of Pakistan, the cultural and traditional context must be kept under consideration. The societal norms bind rural women to be at the sub-ordinate position in the households, having a perception this way women become more desirable when silent. The unspoken words of the female protagonist start shattering the male ruling space of her husband. Hence, the voice of the woman disturbs Ghulam Qadir's mental peace and he expresses his helplessness when her image haunts him even in the fields, "even here, even on the land she haunted him". Thus, silence in the story bears symbolic significance, where it acts as a substitute of perversity. Shireen does not rebel rather accepts the societal expectation of women being passive by keeping silent.

Ghulam Qadir perceives her sub-ordinate position, following the traditional male chauvinism on his own "...as she cooked his meal. Yes, it was for him that she cooked, for him that she worked, for him that she existed. For was she not his woman -she his wife and he her master?" (Hamidullah 101) Qadir's hostile attitude confirms fixed boundaries for woman where she has to be a silent member of household. In other words, Silence is used as a narrative technique to show the passive positioning of female subject in the society. Qadir's bull symbolically represents the silence and passive positioning of woman. It bears Qadir's ferocity but still works for him, in the fields. "...he told himself again and again, thrusting angrily at his bull to give full emphasis to his thoughts, he was her master and would force her to bring forth the fruits of her womb..." as if he was a farmer and she was his field and he would sow his seeds into her to give him fruits like the "fields [which] gave up to him their abundance" (Hamidullah 101). Qadir's bull, fields are his properties and he could not off his hands from his woman to treat her differently. It shows how patriarchy is not letting woman's personality to develop by associating stereotypical gender roles with her, like producing heirs to the blood-line, where she has no narrative of her own. This is what Kaplan calls "Compensatory Politics of voice" (*The Erotics of Talk*:1996,p.4) where woman appears silent.

*The Bull and The She-Devil* (1958) has a classical structure of proper beginning, middle and end, accompanied by the typical third person narrative. The story opens with an omniscient narrator who speaks for all the characters, even for those who did not speak or take part in dialogue throughout the plot. "...though he thought of her again and again with hate, she would not give him peace... frightenedly as the wings of a bird fallen from a bush, when he shouted at her". Qadir's hatred gradually increases for his wife because he appears helpless in voicing his love. Furthermore, no resistance has been observed, from the ones who have been 'silenced' or given any voice to begin with. Like Shireen's character, that has been stencilled over the perennial problems of patriarchal norms, of not giving a voice to woman.

The plot of the text can be perceived in a myriad of possible ways, giving a variety of perspectives. The rhetorical possibilities that the writer sees are reflected through Shireen's silence, which Kaplan calls "The Erotics of Talk" (p.4). For Kaplan, the female agency practicing silence in the narrative triggers male character to be an object of desire. As the narrator states, "where was her heart and who was king of it?" (Hamidullah 104) and "he wanted her to desire him, wanted her voice to soften to him as it softens when she spoke to his brother and his nephew and even his bull." (Hamidullah 105). The softness of her voice is not presented as her weakness but as a power to attract others. Display of feminine characteristics appears as a domineering force in the text. The lines refer to Shireen's husband's inferiority complex due to her indifferent behaviour in the form of silence, only with him.

Apparently, the thematic concerns of the story are 'traditional patriarchal society suppressing women' along with the taboo topics like 'sexuality' and 'sex', transgressing the cultural boundaries. Shireen becomes Hamidullah's silent mouth-piece to record a protest against the misogyny, to promote the unheard dissent female voices who are the victims of terrible marital experiences. As a result of this absurdity of her silence, highlights the existential crisis of man, where Ghulam Qadir's repressed sexuality leads to aggression towards Shireen. This aggression is because he wants to control her as well as please her at the same time. When faced with rejection and lack of control through Shireen's silence and her unwillingness to even protest against her husband directly, Ghulam Qadir is not willing to accept his failure of fulfilment and leading to his frustration and violent behaviour. This aggression further leads to his metaphorical transformation into an animal. The title itself indicates the author's emphasis on 'the Bull' and Shireen - 'the She-Devil' as gender is a

social construct and it is the society which makes or constructs a woman or man. Lindsey (2015) states, “Gender refers to those social, cultural, and psychological traits linked to males and females through particular social contexts. Sex makes male or female; gender makes us masculine or feminine. Sex is an ascribed status because a person is born with it, but gender is an achieved status because it must be learned” (p.4).

Silence, in the discussed narrative, is used against the societal constructs of a patriarchal society. The ending insinuates the literary motif of ‘Human-Animal Metamorphosis’, where Shireen’s husband metaphorically transforms into the Bull, making the story an interesting touch-stone for the discussion of South-Asian ‘male- digression’ when faces female silence. The narrator describes the feelings of Ghulam Qadir when Shireen treats the bull, “it was his wife who ultimately, with a few soft words, calmed the creature and led it back as easily as if it had been a baby lamb.” (Hamidullah 106). This means only she had the ability to tame the bull as well as the husband. This taming of the bull signifies the transformation of Ghulam Qadir into a beast that appears impossible for Shireen to tame. The bull’s symbolic transformation represents Ghulam Qadir’s psychological transformation. Throughout the story, he undergoes a process of mental transformation, aided by his wife’s silence, whereas at the end he is not able to retain his ‘human-form’ anymore. With no human feelings or emotions left, he completely turns into a beast, garbed under a human form, who finally murders his brother and nephew and commits suicide. There is a sense of shame and guilt of being inferior to his wife that started from the incident when the children in the street said to Shireen that “...you have succeeded where uncle could not” (Hamidullah 110). The incident led to more complex events where Ghulam Qadir was unable to handle situations well like his wife. He exhibits all traits of masculinity but still he feels subjugated by the voiceless and powerless creature, his wife, as described in the text, “...to him she was... a body. A body and nothing more... a body that eased the so long suppressed desires of his senses” and “to possess her was his one object in life”. Contrarily to the patriarchal dynamics, Shireen appears as the centre of attention for Ghulam Qadir’s life. He appears as a true picture of Spivak’s ‘subaltern’ who has been de-centred and wants to be noticed and heard by his wife. His desire to be heard resembles the desire of Spivak’s female when she declares, “The subaltern as a female cannot be heard or read” (Spivak 104). The ‘subaltern’ complex hits him more as the society has been accepting his wife and rejecting him as the authority. Therefore, “he picked up a stone and aimed it straight at the animal” taking revenge from it, as in the beginning, it is the only way to vent out his

suppressed emotions. It appears as the very first incident that initiated this unending cycle of violence that ends into tragedy.

The alternative reading of the primary text employs that Silence does not "...result from circumstances of being born into the wrong class, race, or sex, being denied of education, becoming numbered by the economic struggle, muffled by censorship, or distracted, or impeded by the demands of nurturing" (*Silences*, T.Olsen, 1978). Contrary to Olsen's view, Shireen has nothing to say because she is aware of the fact that it would be a waste of her own energy to verbally resist or protest in a traditional patriarchal environment. Her character exudes hostility and sympathy for Ghulam Qadir when he treats the Bull violently as a reaction to her silence. She sympathized against the projection of conservatism. This cultural and contextual dependency of silence extrapolates gendered pragmatism where the silent female narrative propagates her agency disrupting the gender hierarchical patterns of society.

The analysis of various manifestations of Silence in *The Bull and the She Devil* (1958) leads to mystery, obscurity and enigma that is highlighted by the arousal of curiosity in Ghulam Qadir when he feels a secrecy is being maintained by his wife due to her passive behaviour and lack of speech. Another manifestation leads to the absence of sound and the metaphysical connotation, where the 'silence' or lack of participation in dialogue also refers to a meaningful absence. This metaphysical connotation also signifies that there have been no utterances of words or communication in the form of dialogues through the text. This research focuses on the rhetorical silence.

The narrative also challenges the patriarchal values and masculine modes of heroism without explicitly protesting against it, entailing Hamidullah's subversive ideology of 'living out loud' through silence. It may employ the 'male' deafness of a maverick in the husband's inability to 'hear' Shireen's silent behaviour, of which she was conditioned throughout her life. It can also be related to her refusal to speak in order to show her presence. In other words, her silence became a liberating factor, freeing her from the shackles of a traditional patriarchal society in which the story has been set. This employs how the trauma victims become mute and refrain from conversations or dialogues.

Keeping in view Kaplan's ideology (*Erotics of Talk*, 1996), the problem here is not how unruly, wild and ferocious Ghulam Qadir is, but whether the reader is able to 'listen' the silent narrative of Shireen and understand the irony in the description of her character and personality or he also ignores it and takes it as meaningless. Her silent persona is

proclaiming the audience that even her submissiveness gives her agency. In an ironic tone, the unnamed narrator describes Shireen as an eminently traditional and passive young girl, who has been married to a rowdy, unruly and obstreperous man named Ghulam Qadir, at a very young age.

The purpose of this research is two-fold: first the study of silent female narrative against Spivak's Subaltern theory Silence and the second is used as a liberating factor and is also a kind of 'voice'. A feminist psychologist Maureen Mahoney ("The Problem of Silence", 1996) quotes Carol Gilligan's (*In a Different Voice*, 1992) ideology of 'voice being central to women's experience and exercise of power' in her paper (603-625). For Mahoney, Silence is "an avenue to power" (Kaplan 8), rejecting the ideology of 'voice as authority'. This conception lacks multiplicity of perspectives and also ignores the diverse cultural contexts, but for Mahoney Silence is 'complex and multi-dimensional'. Kaplan talks about the "multivocality" or the plurality of silence in narratives which is categorized into further two branches: the lack of conversation or exchange of dialogue and the voicelessness.

From the scrutiny of the 'silent' narrative in the primary text, it can be concluded that the Women getting out of conversation can be considered as a form of practicing their birth-right of 'consent, which has been derailed by the patriarchy as the protagonist Shireen appears to be. Hamidullah, through Shireen's silent narrative, satirizes the way women in society have been deprived of their right to 'consent', a common patriarchal practice in the society it is set in. Conclusively, returning to the narrative technique, in the *Erotics*, Kaplan comments that Bakhtain's theory "of textual dialogics has often been taken to be programmatic, as if the mere identification of 'heteroglossia' is itself a cause for celebration and proof of liberatory or subversive counter forces" (p.11). The rhapsodic praise of the silent narrative in feminist discourse consolidates the restructuring of cultural and traditional conversation through narrative, which in Kaplan's words "talk itself" (p.11). This lack of common language between characters creates misunderstanding and aggression. The reason why Shireen is not at interlocutory position is because she might not consider Ghulam Qadir as her equal as he appears in the text as an unruly, untamed wild beast.

Shireen's silence is highlighted by the self-talks of Ghulam Qadir who finds it as an only way to provide an outlet to his emotions. For Goffman (*Forms of Talk*, 1981), "self-talker" is lunatic or Schizophrenic, who talks even when there is no response from the other side. Silence holds "social power...to turn speakers into 'self-talker' by denying them a hearing" (Kaplan 13). There is a subversion of the established feminist



paradigm of “searching for voice”, where the antagonist husband is actually looking for an interlocutory relationship and the wife responds him with her silence. In the primary text, Silence appears as a feminist enterprise to practice authority. Unlike the most feminist writings in which the recuperative voice is found towards the end, the text focuses on it as distinguished topos. Hamidullah’s female protagonist’s acceptance of culturally imposed silences turns her into an agent to practice power upon her husband. For Kaplan, “this topos is not the search for a voice, but for a listener capable of hearing the voice and responding appropriately to it.” (p.15). Kaplan’s description of the need to be heard by others is parallel to Ghulam Qadir’s desire to get the attention of his wife Shireen. It refers to the “narrative desire” (p.16) of Hamidullah, where a subversive desire acts as a driving force behind narration. Through the subversive narrative of silence, Hamidullah celebrates the “power of argument and counter narration...” making Shireen a “competent interlocutor” (p.15). The subversion of narrative technique in the depiction of women characters present a social critique on the human desire of the search of “an ideal respondent” who never comes and communicates, highlighted through the extended metaphor of Ghulam Qadir’s character. Due to the absence of an ideal respondent, silence causes misunderstanding which finally leads to the tragic end of the story.

The research is a scrutiny of silence as a tool in the feminist epistemology, where social construct of ‘voice-lessness’ of women in literature refers to their powerlessness, submissiveness and subordination based on a masculine biased ideology. The rural society, in which the story is set in, conditions women in such a manner that they are meant to be not ‘seen’ and ‘heard’ which is prevalent in the silent narrative of Shireen. Ghulam Qadir married Shireen because the village match-maker Amna manipulated him by saying “she will sway to your slightest wishes, for she is a child nurtured to womanhood in an atmosphere of tenderness and affection”. Shireen appears as an embodiment of stereotypical feminine traits which anyone could expect from her. Her solitude, voicelessness and individuality have been implicitly depicted through her personality in the story. In retrospect, the silent narrative also refers to the conversation with the reader, and also presents an appropriate counter narrative of feminist writings. This has been reflected in Ghulam Qadir’s inability or incapability of having a real dialogue or a healthy conversation resulting in his transformation from a human to a beast.

Hamidullah’s subversive female narrative signifies the recovery of the lost voices of society, who have been silenced by the patriarchal

conditioning. The recuperation through silence functions as voice of resistance without any argument. This is quite paradoxical, as the acceptance of the patriarchal norm hinders the way of fulfilling sexual and personal desires. The “text’s subversive agency” (Kaplan 18) through the silent narrative is an anti-thesis to the cultural gendered conversations.

The research uses Anti-Subaltern approach to Spivak’s theory, which extrapolates Silence in the formation of women as second-class citizens, rejecting this cursory view. Kaplan terms this concept as ‘gender-blindness’ (p.8), where the social conception of gender role associated with women is that they are meant to be seen only and not heard. This solitude, voicelessness and individuality has been mirrored by Hamidullah in her silent narrative. She has “a heart filled to over-flowing with love of everything living.” But with him, she was “as cold as ice to his caresses as the pieces of ice they put into glass of lassi”. She is having an autonomy of silence which does not imprison her into the definition of a second-class citizen anymore.

The narrative structure of the story can be studied in the light of Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1981) Polyphony -the multiplicity of voices which are equal in relation to each other. This is crucial to the narratology of the story, as there is one apparent narrative of Ghulam Qadir, seeing the world from ‘male’ perspective, and another Shireen’s Silent narrative of the female. For Bakhtin, different characters have various distinct perspectives and desires, and this system of polyphonic voices promote the free development of perspectives, which in this story are social gendered roles. “The plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousness, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is, in fact, the chief characteristic” (*Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 1981, p.6) way of writing for Bakhtin. This is his dialogic principle of writing, narrative being ‘multi-voiced’ and presenting multiple perspectives or dialogues. He presents this Dialogism in contrast to ‘Monologism’ -the single voice of author, where the characters are the mouth-pieces of the author’s omnipotent voice, celebrating the explicit authority of the author. His Dialogism embraces polyphony or the multiplicity of voices in a text. This offers a richness of tone and aesthetic complexity, saving the plot from being flat.

Bakhtin (1981) states “Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of dialogic interaction” (p.110). This means that there is a constant dialogue between perspectives which he terms as the ‘politics of polyphony’. It is an open-ended dialogue between equal subjects, unlike Spivak’s silent narrative that ranks the silent one as a

second-class citizen. This narrative is not guided by a single voice of authority, instead allows equal rights of expression to both the characters regardless of their gender. For Shireen, it gives her a right to resist without uttering any word, whereas for Ghulam Qadir, it provides an outlet to his frustrations of being rejected and not being able to have a dialogue with her. The narrative has been filtered through an authorial lens that Hamidullah imagined a dystopia of inequality, oppression and non-existent women voices in Pakistani society.

The silence is like an effigy, a prototype of women voices in the contemporary Pakistani society. Shireen's silence signifies the feminist indifference towards the patriarchal frustrations. Even when he has beaten Shireen in the streets for being kind to the bull, she did not cry out. This silence is critical to her resistance, her only outlet that keeps her sane as this is the passive role that society imposed on her. It takes over the narrative, where the traditional narratives of protagonist are not available to her, because they are not true to her experience. So, she whole-heartedly accepts her voicelessness and uses it as a tool against the patriarchy. This is the only way to tell her story, and her story survives amongst the silence. On the contrary, her Shireen's lack of reaction contrasts with Abdul Qadir's reaction as he himself cried like a "mortally wounded animal" (Hamidullah 112)

The question that whether the story is presented from a particular 'gendered' perspective or not, will also be considered in the research. The relationship between gender and narrative, i.e., how gender and sexuality shape texts and their interpretations, has been a part of the academic debate for decades. French feminist Hélène Cixous(1976) in *The Laugh of Medusa* coined a term 'Écritureféminine' or women's writing, describing femininity as a social construct and not something that is defined by one's biological characteristics. For Cixous, misogyny drives out women to explore their desires and women must use their bodies as their inspiration. This expression of bodily autonomy which she related to 'open-ness', is described through the silent narrative of Shireen in Hamidullah's *The Bull and the She-Devil*(1958), as it is her only way of expressing her existence.

Another way in which Shireen also expresses her existence is, by not fulfilling her husband's desires and giving him the satisfaction or fulfilment, by establishing an authoritative silent voice when a broader culture of patriarchy is denying it. This silent narrative is the declaration of her own territory, which is inaccessible to any other, giving rise to aggressive reactions from Ghulam Qadir's side. "he noticed, first with apprehension and then with anger that her face, so expressionless when

speaking to him, was soft and sweet when turned towards his nephew, his elder brother or his bullock”(Hamidullah 102). This narrative reflects the conscious female choice to remain silent in a patriarchal society that demands women to be silent puppets in the hands of men. Hamidullah’s silent narrative, in contrast to the third person omniscient narrator provides an equal opportunity to the women, reflecting their side of story, which is never available. The realization of the value of this silent narrative is celebrated as heroic. This state of women being complacent, brings tragedy at the end, as Ghulam Qadir ends up murdering his own brother, and committing suicide himself.

In retrospect, the other ‘male’ plot trajectory that is inherent to the story is also presented through an unnamed omniscient narrator, which is created by the author to hold a mirror to the patriarchal society. This narrator becomes a mouth-piece of the patriarchal society that objectifies women, call them names like “She-Devil” (Hamidullah 101), normalize misogyny to such an extent that it seems comical. This totalitarian system has been satirized, by assuring the reader that this patriarchal system will eventually be over-ruled at the end. It will end itself, in the same manner as Ghulam Qadir ended his own life by jumping into the well.

This primary narrative can be explained better in Peter Brooks (*Reading for the Plot*, 1984) words. For him, a classic plot is a trajectory of desire that mirrors the sexual experience of the normalized ‘male’ subject. The exposition requires an ‘arousal’, the middle involves expectations and frustrations, whereas the denouement is a climatic release from desire.

For Brooks (1984), the narrative desire is a desire to seduce or captivate the readers, in order to make them conversational partners. For him, narration is:

“a form of human desire . . . that seeks to seduce and to subjugate the listener, to implicate him in the thrust of a desire that can never quite speak its name—never quite come to the point—but that insists on speaking over and over again its movement toward that name. . . . Narrative may first come to life as narration, as the inchoate intent to tell.... It is in essence the desire to be heard, recognized, understood, which, never wholly satisfied or indeed satisfiable, continues to generate the desire to tell, the effort to enunciate a significant version of the life story in order to captivate a possible listener.” (Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*, 53)

Similarly, for Robert Scholes (*Fabulation and Metafiction*, 1979), narrative movement is similar to the “sexualact. . . the fundamental orgasmic rhythm of tumescence and detumescence, of tension and resolution, of intensification to the point of climax and consummation.” (Kaplan 17)

Kaplan takes “this rhetoric of ‘seduction’, ‘captivation’, ‘thrusting’, ‘subjugation’, ‘tumescence’ and ‘detumescence’” as a necessary tool in the interpretation of narrative desire, which is based as “fundamentally male and heterosexual” insinuating that narrative desire, takes “shape as a battle or a contest.” Thus, Hamidullah’s narrative is a social critique on the “masculinized, heterosexual, martial model of narrative desire” (Kaplan 17). For many feminist critics, women writings have a ‘patterned’ plot in their narrative that emphasize on the details and repetitions. The plot of this story is a perfect blend of both the ‘gendered’ plots, representing the dialogic voices from both perspectives. In other words, there is a celebration of the dichotomy of voices through the use of vernacular language and the presentation of the story in an alternate order, i.e., through a silent narrative of the female protagonist.

### **Conclusion:**

This research concludes that the voice-lessness of Spivak’s ‘Subalterns’ is termed in a different way as the heroine’s agency to remain silent along with the recognition of the ‘female subject-status’. Hamidullah’s subversive scrutinization of female consciousness of self-identity, liberating the female protagonist from the shackles of patriarchal societal norms introduces a diverse opinion. The author’s deliberate attempt to present the previously under-presented idea of a ‘Silent Hero’, mastering his fate, through subversive ideology of Silent Feminism presents another aspect of patriarchal society. The Anti-essentialist-conception for females, shatters the conspiracy of silence not as ‘the inability to speak’ but as a liberating factor and a silent narrative of its own.



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