

A Study Of Phallocentrism, Trauma And Suffering In Tahmima Anam's The Good Muslim

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ABSTRACT:

Aside From the different wars, the partition of Bangladesh and India was one among the pitiful incidents that happened in human history. Bangladesh had gone through a huge surge in humanitarian catastrophe after the 1971 Bangladesh war of partition, due to the regular occurrence of violence in both social and private domain. Massacre, abduction was pre owned to promote racial and gender hate, and women were subjugated more than men. Thousands of people were uprooted from their home during the partition and even lost their individuality. Hence, this paper investigates how the partition's impact on women by making them the numb victim of the phallocentric ideology through the Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim*. Mostly women were sexually violent, kidnapped, compelled to the slavery and died during the liberation war. Due to the phallocentric rules during liberation war women were mostly in the traumatic condition whether it is there in the family or society where they stayed in. Women suffered mentally, physically, socially and psychologically. *The Good Muslim* is concerned with matters of helplessness, brutality, religious turmoil, and alienation. The study will analyze the insecurities of women in the aftermath of the liberation period that is made and severed by ravishment and oppression committed at every sphere. Female leading protagonists like Maya, Rehana and Piya are presented as authorized representatives of revolution when it comes to sensitive circumstances that restore them as insignificant and not noticeable. The paper also attempts to analyze the issues for which women went through all the traumas and impact of phallocentrism on them.

keywords: Phallocentrism, trauma, Humanitarian crises, violence, suffering.

INTRODUCTION

The 1971 liberation war and the partition were one of the most harrowing incidents that happened after the 1947 India Pakistan division. The communal hatred led to devastating loss of lives, home, identity and individuality. This animosity spread a sorrow atmosphere which is marked by abduction, massacres and sexual torture, with women bearing the brunt of these atrocities, suffering immensely happened as a result. The accurate counts of abducted women are not known, and counts vary. It is said during that time in total 100,000 women and young girls were raped and killed on all sides. The government of India roughly calculated 33,000 Indian and Pakistani government estimated approximately 50,000 Muslim women raped and murdered in India. Restoration also occurred in restitution for those heinous acts and kidnapping by the two countries' governments. But this rehabilitation has been unfruitful because many families of the victims declined to accept their wives, daughters, and sisters as they considered them impure and stigma of the war, and many women by their own decision denied to go back to their own native places as they were reduced to a mere object of sexual pleasure and subjugation that from their inner self. They became empty of any feelings to accept and any belongingness under the domination. East Pakistan was one of the parts of Pakistan which got separated in the year of 1971 and framed as a new country called Bangladesh. The Bangladesh liberation war and subsequent formation of the country have become the significant part in the country's history and their identity, and the events of that were keenly documented through various narratives. As the title suggests, this paper is going to study about the phallocentrism and trauma in Tahmima Anam's novel *The Good Muslim* which is mainly a fictional narrative about the post 1971 Bangladesh independence war. Through the discussion of the phallocentrism and gendered construction of the

national identity, trauma and complexity of the gender roles in the book, i will attempt to show contemporary society during that period.

Phallocentrism is the word first used by Ernest Jones in the year of 1927 contrary to feminine sexual theory by Sigmund Freud, the discussion held in between the Viennese and the English school of psychoanalysis in 1932. This term is totally against the article "The dissolution of The Oedipus Complex Deutsch" which was written by Sigmund Freud and in that Ernest Jones said that Freud's theory was completely phallocentric and this term depicts and developed the various theories which came in existence like phallocentrism, which showed the position of male in the society. Through that we can even analyze the phallocentric language in the literature. Prominently Phallocentrism can be defined as dominance of males in every aspect of the society. Phallocentrism is the philosophy that the male genital is the central element in the matter of the social, cultural world. In psychoanalytic theory the phallus is considered the supreme symbol of masculine power and simultaneously it lacks in female.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

"Tahmima Anam's *A Golden Age: A Family Saga of Love, Duty and Identity against the Backdrop of War*" is an article by Mohammad Moniruzzaman Miah published in the year 2020, in which he concretely discusses and explores love and duty as the main theme of the novel. This article critically analyzes how Anam intensely mediates and resolves the tension between the immediacy of the love and clamancy of duty at the time of Bangladesh liberation war. It also highlights the position of women in pre-independence East Pakistan of male dominated Bengali society and their struggle against various misogynistic norms portrayed through the defiant activities of Rehana who is a protagonist of the text. Apart from that, it also focused on the issue of the protagonist's struggle with her outsider status, emphasizing her efforts to embrace her Bangladeshi heritage despite being raised in another country with different ethnic and cultural background.

"War Mothers in a Non-fiction and Two Fictional works on the Liberation War of Bangladesh" is an article published in the year 2015 by Shahnaz Shithy, a doctorate in English literature from Washington University. This article provides information regarding the condition of people and violation of human rights during the war period, particularly the men who are engaged in fighting in the war field.

"Push and Breathe: A Feminine Way to Tackle Violence and Trauma in the Selected Novels of Tahmima Anam and Monica Ali" is an article which was published in the year 2020 by Dr. Abhisarika Prajapati and Asma Fatima. In this article the writer provides the information about female war victims who were treated by Rehana and her daughter Maya at rehabilitation centers. It gives ideas about the torturing on women during the liberation war period and how soldiers and civilian raped them and how they are denied by their family members.

"Religion, Diaspora and the Politics of a Homing Desire in the Writings of Zia Haider Rehman, Tahmima-Anam and Monica Ali" is an article by Fyeza Hasanat. This paper examines Tahmima Anam's opinion of the veiled spirit and portrayal of the extremist frictions in contexts of Diaspora consciousness. This paper also investigates the re-presentation of the harmful seductive power and the political landscape of the country in the novels of the Diaspora writers of Bangladesh.

"Questioning Global Muslim Diaspora: Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim*" is an article by Aziz Ahmed which was published in the year January 2019. Here in this article writer gives us a clear view about who is a good Muslim and this paper also questions the dichotomy of being born in the fundamentally Islamic milieu with prevailing silhouettes of pre 1971 people's thought and radical belief are seen through the character Maya and Sohail. And the important thing in the paper is who will be called a Good Muslim?

"Traces of Phallocentrism, trauma and holocaust imagery in What the body Remembers and Ice Candy Man" is an article by Aisha which was published in the year of 2023. Here she discusses about the racial hate, women suffering and male dominance supremacy through the partition novels. It also showed the traumatic experience of women in phallocentric society. This article also demonstrates the resistance and retaliation against the phallocentrism.

"The poetics of identities making: Precarity and agency in Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim*" is an article by Xinxan Chew and Moussa discuss about the insecure environment for women in post liberation war period which is fueled and worsened by violence and subjugation happened at every ground of the society. There are many female characters who are introduced as empowered representatives of social evolution when it comes to weak situations that render women as insignificant and unstable. The study finds that the novel seeks, alters the generalized beliefs and depiction of females included in normalizing and hegemonic discourse.

Research gap

From the above literature reviewed it is found that mostly the works have been done on the area of identity, feminist perspective, diaspora, migration and no work has been done in the area of phallocentrism and trauma in *The Good Muslim*. Hence this research has chosen to embark on this study.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The paper prominently studies the selected novels of Tahmima Anam alongside the events of the liberation war.

This paper's main objective is to study the phallocentrism and consequences of trauma in selected novels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research paper will be a close text analysis of the selected text of Aman using the theories of phallocentrism. This is a theoretical research study, where secondary information produced by different authors and researchers will be used for analysis.

Theoretical analysis of Phallocentrism, trauma and suffering

The term phallocentrism emerged from the psychoanalysis theory. Early on the time this word was coined by Ernest Jones criticized Sigmund Freud's focus on the phallus or male centric in psychosexual development. Later this concept was expanded by Jacques Derrida by coining the term phallogocentrism, which derived from the combination of phallocentrism and logocentrism which mostly associated with the masculinity and the idea that reason and logic are central to understanding the whole world. Literary critics use the term phallocentrism to study and analyze how the male characters are often the heroes or the central figure in the text and female plays the secondary roles. Mainly phallocentrism theme can be seen vividly in war narratives. Trauma theory refers to the study of the psychological and emotional response of the individual which they went through in their past and those overwhelming experiences leaves a lasting impact on their memory and hunt them all the time. Cathy Caruth in her writing 'Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history' explains that trauma is a repeated agony of occurrence. And the disastrous events occur in their mind again who went through it. She showed that the traumatic experience is not the moment of any event but the whole event through which one suffered. Partition event has mainly testified to be a trauma from which India and its neighboring countries have not completely recovered. Genuine traumatic experiences not have lasting effect in its history writing, an event which is condemned by many. The analysis and description of traumatic experience and violence seems more powerful in literature because it narrates with all the sentiments and utmost feelings of the society through which body passed through in history.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Phallocentrism and trauma in Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim*:

The Good Muslim is set almost after a decade of the liberation war of the 1980's. It was published in the year 2011, by the publisher Canon Gate. In this novel Tahmima Anam mainly discusses the violation of human rights especially the violation of women rights through the various characters of the novel. After independence of Bangladesh the life of brother and sister has changed. Both Maya and Sohail have changed and they adopt differently towards the new political social setting. In 1984 Maya returned home after 7 long years when she heard about the death of her beloved sister-in-law Silvi. Upon arriving at her home, she found everything had changed in her home. She saw her mother in a death bed suffering from cancer. She became disheartened when she saw her brother changed drastically. Maya and Sohail both are siblings and children of Mrs. Rehana Haque, both are very fond of each other. Their way of thinking and mentality are same, but when Maya returned to Raj Shahi, she found everything changed and the phallocentrism was at its peak in the name of religion and women were suffering from trauma. It's stories dwells in 1981 and with the flashback of 1971 the immediate post partition era.

The partition literature is the fusion of extreme pain, suffering and bloodshed. History of any partition is the history of violation and trauma. The insufficient aspect in writing the history of trauma and suffering is that society granted cardinal forces rather than asserting the victimhood of the victims. Innumerable number of people were estimated to have been attacked, assaulted, numerous numbers violated and converted from one religion to another, uncountable numbers uprooted from one place to another and converted in to refugees in Bangladesh liberation war 1971. Through many instances in the novel we can see the phallocentric mindset of the people during and after the liberation war like, from the beginning of the novel if we see, Rehana did not get the custody of her children only because she was a single widowed mother and her brother in law get the custody of them. Her struggle to find money pushes her to consider remarriage, sexual harassment, which she avoids all the time because during that time women without her husband has no fortune. The patriarchal society norms and traditional gender role that only a man can be a bread earner of the family that always breaks down to Rehana putting her into trauma. When we look into the character of Maya, she is doctor who is serving to the war affected people and ladies. She performs the abortions of war victims but she gets no praise for it rather her brother Sohail who is in the Tablighi jamaat and religious extremist gets all praise for his work even if it gives no good message to the society. Maya was molested by the army personnel in the rescue centers when she was performing abortions and putting bandages to the victims. No one was raising voice for her not even her batch mates even if they very well known to it. Another character Piya who was one of the good friends of Maya who came to Shona for the shelter, because her family members refused to accept her and the cause of refusal was pregnancy. She was raped and abducted by the Pakistani army, later she became pregnant. When she came with that stigma, to hide it, Sohail wanted to marry her because he could not tolerate her condition. But the phallocentric society did not accept it. Nazia, she is introduced as Maya's good friend, a villager in Raj Shahi who was punished for her adultery by her

husband, she has given one hundred lashes-that being the punishment to her. She was punished only because he was given birth to a child who looks like Chinese and having Down syndrome and her husband refuse to accept him says, resembles “chink...a Chinese”. And village people made a taboo that she could not even bath and swim in the river where others bath. That incident shows how women were treated badly during that period, and how they survived in phallogentric society. During the partition of Bengal, the lives of women were horrendous, they suffered in every phase of the society. Tahmima narrates the novel from 1971 to 1985 which is the formation of Bangladesh to aftermath period of it. Her portrayal of characters in the novel in order to grasp and comprehend thoroughly the women’s victimization at the time of partition in every parts and aspect, whether it was incorporated with physical or emotional, in which religion played a vital role in pre, post-liberation and during liberation war. Women suffer a lot because of the communal violences, as riots became a major instrument in the hands of phallogentric society to victimize women of other community, in order to insult each other or to take revenge they take women as an object, these things are clearly depicted in this novel. The foreground and theme of the novel was vital because it showed how phallogentric tradition grew more and more. Mainly the last part was essential to understand the situation because it was totally devoted to the struggle of Maya under phallogentric or male dominating society after the liberation war, whether it is within her family or in her work field where she was subjugated by army personnel.

CONCLUSION

Women exploitation is one of the evils facing women throughout the world. Women being easily targets of suffering, humiliation, dispossession and discrimination during the war. partition literature explores the sexual harassment, trauma, sufferings and painful phallogentric activities of women during and after the war. This in many ways, shows the fact that inequality of genders is neither a biological concept or divine mandate but a cultural notion. Tahmima Anam specifically in this novel examines the violation of female rights in various perspectives whether it is in the form of trauma or phallogentrism. Thus, *The Good Muslim* also depicted Phallogentric power and domination are responsible for degradation and dehumanization of women, treating them as objects rather than individuals, thereby ruining and devastating their lives. Anam through *The Good Muslim*, tried to describe incidents of raping, beating, and victimization of the female body metaphorically presented the condition of both the countries through female characters.

To conclude, it can be said that the physical and emotional pain of women and the dynamic violence on them left a silent impact and marks are uncountable. Tahmima Anam raises her voices against phallogentric society and communal disturbances on women during Partition and after the partition era through her women characters and their conditions. Many succumbed without any vengeance. So, this paper is an attempt to present the pain, sufferings and subjugation in the traumatic period of Partition by the hands of phallogentric society as a way of retaliation against phallogentrism.

ABBREVIATION

This Manuscript deliberately avoids abbreviations, preferring to present all terms and phrases in their full form for consistent clarity.

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Both authors have contributed equally to this research.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no such conflicts of interest regarding the study of this article.

ETHICS APPROVAL

This paper is not under any ethical violations.

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