



A Study of Feminism in Nadia Hashmi's A House without Window

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Abstract

Literary theories are the tools, by which we attempt to understand literature. These are the school of thoughts or style of literary analysis that gives reader a point to judge any piece of literature. There are varieties of literary theory, including new criticism theory, formalist literary theory, structuralism and post-structuralism literary theory, feminist literary theory, marxist literary theory and so on. These theories help readers to gain a deeper understanding of literature. In this research paper an attempt has been made to analyze the novel "A House without Window" by Nadia Hashmi from the feminist perspective. Nadia Hashmi is one of those writers who dared to openly discuss the issues like womens social exploitation, politics, internal and external hardship, balancing the home and professional life, the challenges of society with regards to development of women. "A House without Window" is a novel that deals with violence against women in Afghanistan patriarchal society. In this research paper it is discovered that violence against women shatters the peace and good understanding of families in Afghanistan. Furthermore, it suggests that women should be given freedom with all the rights and be protected from violence and exploitation so that they may also contribute the society.

Key Words: *Feminism, Afghanistan, Domestic violence, Crime, Justice*

Introduction

Feminism is a belief that women should have the same right and opportunities as men. It incorporates the position that society prioritize the male point of view and the women are treated unjustly within those societies. Women's right in Afghanistan have oscillated back and forth depending on the time period. Women officially gained equality under 1964 constitution. However those right were taken away in 1990's thought different temporary rulers such as Taliban during the ongoing civil war.

Many women in Afghanistan experience at least one form of abuse. In 2015 the World Health Organization reported that 90% of women in Afghanistan had experienced at least one form of domestic violence. Violence against women in Afghanistan ranges from verbal abuse and psychological abuse to physical abuse and unlawful killing. Customs and tradition which are influenced by centuries-old patriarchal rules prevail, the issue of violence against women becomes pronounced. The high illiteracy rate among the population further perpetuates the problem. A number of women across Afghanistan believe that it is acceptable for their husband to abuse them.



This research paper tries to describe the struggle of Afghanistan women in gaining self-identity in their society. Under twenty years of war, women in Afghanistan suffer a lot from oppressive situation and the root cause of this is male dominating society. Afghanistan women face difficulties at all the levels of Afghanistan patriarchal society. Male domination is the root cause of damaging the women's rights. The novel *A House without Window* is a great example of women exploitation in Afghanistan. In this novel Hashmi tries to show the condition of women in Afghanistan and how they struggle for their identity in the male dominating society. The author did a good job in describing this incredibly. This novel is about a woman living in Afghanistan who is imprisoned based on the assumption she killed her husband. It shows how women are treated in these countries on a regular basis.

This book is about Zeba, an Afghanistan woman, who is a loving and dutiful wife. Instead of it she endured her husband beating and drinking for years, bearing him four living children cooking and clearing and always, being a dutiful wife. She is accused of committing a terrible crime. Her husband has been found with a hatchet in his head and she was discovered in blood when found. There is a little doubt that she was the one who embed the hatchet in the back of her husband's skull. But she didn't talk about what happened. Even after she was arrested and sent to Chil Mahtab, the women's prison. The author described Zeba's experiences in prison. The prison is full of women who are confined and defined by the immoral crimes they have committed. Nafisha, an eighteen year old, was imprisoned to protect her from an honor killing, Latifa, a twenty five year old, that choose to be imprisoned because it is safe for her than her actual life, Mazghain, a twenty year old who is pregnant, unmarried and waiting on court order. When Zeba arrives at the women's prison she is in state of shock and a shattered vision of her former self. Her case is assigned to Yusuf, an Afghan-born American lawyer who has returned his birthplace out of commitment to human right. He is given Zeba's case and he tries his hardest even though he knows it is probably hopeless. The attitude towards women are still somewhere in the dark age but he tries and he tries hard. But with the fate of this seemingly ordinary housewife in his hands, Yusuf discovers that like Afghanistan itself, his client may not be at all what he imagines.

Conclusion

Nadia Hashmi's *A House Without Window* takes the reader to Afghanistan to see not only the plight of women there but to see the way in which its justice system still punishes women and how these people are working to right the imbalances so prevalently today. Hashmi did a good job by using the imprisoned women in the story to show overall significance of women in the culture and inequalities they suffer in all the aspects of life but certainly in the justice system. This book shows women's struggle against patriarchy. The analysis is focused on the female characters who deal with problem solving to their unfair condition such as Zeba, Latifa, Nafisha and Mezghan. They begin to build self-consciousness, to demand their basic right such as the right to speak,



the right to get education and the right to work to earn money. The strong self awareness determination as reflected from the female characters is the women's primary step to get rid of male dominating society.

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