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Beyond the Veil of Patriarchy: A Psychoanalytic Feminist Examination of Gender-Based Violence in Khan's *Someone Like Her*



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Abstract

All across the world, particularly in South Asia, male chauvinism consistently contributes to gender inequality. The majority of women in this region are the victims of emotional and physical abuse that can be attributed to male chauvinism and gender stereotypes deeply ingrained in its societies. Using the lens of psychoanalytic feminism, this study analyzes Awais Khan's *Someone Like Her* (2023), a novel set in one such society where patriarchal norms dictate women's lives. The current study utilizes a qualitative approach and focused on how gender stereotypes in society, gender-based violence, and masculine chauvinism influence the life of the novel's protagonist Ayesha. It focuses on the mistreatment that Ayesha received and how women are treated generally in society. Using the theoretical frameworks developed by Nancy Chodorow and Juliet Mitchell, the study looks at how patriarchal structures and gender-biased social norms work together to sustain oppression and gender inequality. This approach highlights how literature can question society norms, promote gender equality, and elevate the voices of underrepresented groups in addition to illuminating how it reflects and critiques them. Using this perspective, the study shows how literature may influence public opinion and promote social change.

Keywords: Psychoanalytic, Feminism, Gender, Stereotype, Male Chauvinism, Patriarchy

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The term 'Male chauvinism' refers to the belief that men are superior to women and it eventually leads to the dominance of men in both personal and professional spheres. This dominance is not a recent occurrence but it has been deeply ingrained in society for generations because men have historically positioned women as inferior by viewing them as the 'weaker' sex (Sultana, 2012). Male chauvinism can be viewed as a type of patriarchy, in which the idea that men are superior serves as the basis for dominance. Patriarchy can be referred to as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women (Sylvia Walby, 1990).

In patriarchal systems, women are often burdened with gender stereotypes, which help sustain patriarchy and heavily influence how male and female characters are depicted in literature. Male chauvinism is most noticeable when women attempt to resist these very stereotypes or act in ways that subvert male authority (Woods, 1976). These prejudices and stereotypes have throughout long been a reflection of a larger cultural bias that devalues women. Women are more susceptible to domestic and sexual abuse in today's culture because of long-standing social injustices (Jacobson, 2011). These differences are caused by a variety of factors, but the two major ones are male chauvinism and patriarchy.

The current study focuses on Awais Khan's *Someone Like Her* (2023), a book set in Multan, Pakistan, that follows the tale of Ayesha, a self-assured and self-reliant 27-year-old who works for a nonprofit that assists victims of domestic violence. When Raza, a wealthy man, develops an obsession with her and demands to have her in his life, it upends her tranquil existence. Raza coerces Ayesha into an engagement with

him in spite of her reservations by using a variety of control and manipulative techniques. Ayesha finds the courage to resist as he presses her harder, but her defiance has violent results. Driven by his wounded ego, Raza pursues her to London to continue his humiliation and abuse after viciously attacking her by flinging acid in her face. Ayesha's narrative serves as an example of the terrible effects of male chauvinism and patriarchal ideas since she endures both physical abuse and oppressive social stereotypes.

The current study examines the book through the lens of psychoanalytic feminism. According to psychoanalytic feminism, male dominance is a deeply rooted psychological urge, and that men unconsciously attempt to enslave women (Kristina Wolff, 2007). The human mind is the source of both this desire to dominate and women's resistance to it. According to Chodorow (1989), this oppression and bias are a universal psychological experience that transcends all nations and historical periods. In patriarchal societies, violence against women is pervasive and cuts across socioeconomic class, religion, and educational attainment. Men frequently use physical domination to demonstrate their authority and take advantage of women's weaknesses. Boudet et al. (2013) states that since childhood, girls are taught to be helpful, obedient, and courteous from an early age. This kind of upbringing reinforces gender norms and their place in a society that prioritizes conformity over independence.

Statement of the Problem

Men have always been considered to be superior to women and due to this belief, women have always been subjected to discrimination and abuse. According to psychoanalytic feminism, this way of thinking stems from men's fundamental, frequently unconscious need to dominate and control women. The prevalence of gender-based violence, such as domestic abuse, and the marginalization of women in patriarchal countries are caused by this belief system. Women's oppression is also caused by deeply rooted prejudices and male-centered cultural norms, which further solidify their inferior status in society.

Research Objectives

Examining the ways in which the novel's male chauvinistic attitudes and actions support the occurrence of gender-based violence.

Looking into the instances of sexist abuse that Raza Masood inflicts on Ayesha.

Analyzing how Ayesha is represented and handled in *Someone Like Her* (2023) and how these prejudices influence the protagonist's experiences and how other people see her is part of this.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it explores how various forms of oppression shape societal attitudes and behaviors. By examining the themes of victimhood and gender stereotypes in the novel, it highlights the deeper cultural biases that help in maintaining and sustaining patriarchy. Understanding these dynamics helps reveal the broader influence of male chauvinism on social structures and individual experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Feminism is a social and intellectual movement that advocates gender equality by challenging systemic discrimination and oppressive social norms (Khan et al., 2021). It seeks to dismantle patriarchal structures that limit women's rights and opportunities, promoting a more just and equitable society (Tyson, 2014). According to Khan et al. (2021), feminism brings to light the challenges women encounter in a male-dominated society. French feminist Simone de Beauvoir questioned the notion that biological sex dictates gender identity, challenging the long-held belief that gender roles are defined by biological distinctions between men and women.

Psychoanalysis is a psychological theory and therapeutic approach developed by Sigmund Freud that explores the unconscious mind, repressed emotions, and early childhood experiences to understand human behavior (Tyson, 2014). It suggests that unconscious desires and past traumas shape thoughts, emotions, and relationships, influencing personality and mental health. Key concepts include the id, ego, and superego, as well as defense mechanisms and psychosexual development (Tyson, 2014).

Psychoanalytic feminism applies psychoanalytic theories to gender and patriarchy, examining how unconscious processes shape gender identity, power dynamics, and women's oppression (Tyson, 2014). It argues that traditional gender roles and societal norms are deeply embedded in the psyche from early childhood, reinforcing patriarchal structures. Scholars like Nancy Chodorow and Juliet Mitchell highlight how family dynamics and early experiences contribute to gendered socialization, perpetuating male dominance and female subordination.

Gender stereotypes help in maintaining the patriarchal system by shaping perceptions of women as subordinate and men as authoritative. Literature often reflects and perpetuates these biases, portraying male and female characters in ways that align with traditional gender norms. The influence of male chauvinism on women's lives has been explored in several literary works. These works highlight how male chauvinism restrict women's life choices and it also makes them suffer from mental and physical abuse. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Mariam's father's desertion of her shows the psychological cost of such oppression and stereotypes while Nana's character represents the systemic oppression women endure in a male-dominated society. In *Twilight in Delhi*, Ahmed Ali shows how societal norms influence a woman's psycho-sexual development and how South Asian women's identities are shaped by their distinct experiences (Malik et al., 2020). Another esteemed work that looks into the oppression of women due to male chauvinism is Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. The drama's protagonist Nora is expected to follow her husband's wishes in every way. This reveals how these social norms limit women's liberty and personal development by confining them to household responsibilities and sustaining gender inequity (Rafiq Nawab et al., 2024). Rind and Larik (2016) state that the works of Nadeem Aslam also shed light on how women are frequently ostracized and oppressed in patriarchal societies. His works also highlight the various psychological, sociological, and emotional difficulties that women encounter in such societies including forced marriage, sexual assault, and honor killings. Sharma (2015) investigates patriarchy and male chauvinism in Indian literature, with a focus on Anand's writings. Several female characters in his works suffer under the weight of a patriarchal system and show how Indian women are frequently restricted to the traditional duties of cleaning, cooking, and appeasing their husbands. Ammu's figure

in *The God of Small Things* represents the deeply rooted misery and sorrow that many women experience. In this novel, Arundhati Roy highlights the social inequities that exist in contemporary India, particularly the mistreatment of women and the exploitation of the poor.

Muhammad Adnan@ (2022) in their article Female submissiveness in *The Kite Runner* by Khalid Hosseini talks about the psychological female submissiveness as it is quite relevant to the female submissiveness. Though the idea of female submissiveness is quite evident in Awaiz 'Someone Like her' yet the same layers are inquired by the researchers in female submissiveness in Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*.

In another research studies published in 2016 by the researcher Bhaktawar Alishba and Muhammad Adnan known as *The Mythopoetic Studies of Mask by Euripides play Media*. The research study highlights the mental mask and space of female characters in the research studies as the contemporary studies is also dealing with mental alienation and anxiety in the light of Psychoanalysis. The mental suppression of woman is quite akin to the mental suppression of classical woman of ancient Greece. Both of the researches showcase the suppression of woman in different eras. The past research spotlights the intricacies of suppression through mask whereas the contemporary research signals out through psychoanalysis.

In another research article entitled as *Never Let Me Go: Nostalgia for real* (2021) by Adnan@ is about psychoanalysis of Ishiguro. In this fiction, the character of Ishiguro is analyzed in the light unbalance sentimentality. He is examined in the light fearful prediction of future shocks, fear horror and terror, which often taken as overthinking emotions and nostalgia. Both of the studies, the research study which had been done and the contemporary studies are linked to gather due to the psychological networks which is a vast filed in the research studies.

Farhad, Adnan and Akhtar in their research article Feminism and Psychoanalysis in A.J. Finn's *The Woman in the Window* (2021) elucidate the psychological paradigms. The contemporary research studies highlight the function of psychological insights in the light of psychoanalysis. The current research study shifts its camera on orient woman who is struggling with submissiveness in the cruel clutch of patriarchy, on the other hand occident woman is also wrenched in the jaws of male dominant samaj in the west. The research shows, it is universal fact that still woman of contemporary time is struggling.

Maria, Adnan and Iram Khalil talk about the female suppression in two remarkable works *The Odyssey by Homer* and *The Odyssey* by Usman Ali. Both of the classic and postmodern epic and drama reflect the suppressed and dark desires of women belong to the different ages as same is the case with the following research layer in which the female submissiveness is portrayed by the researcher.

Another research studies which deals with cinema and fiction unfold the suppression of two different women; the woman who is brought up in west and repressed in northerner areas of Pakistan. The researchers; Zaheer, S., Adnan, M., Qureshi, T., Khalil, I., & Iqbal, M. (2024) discuss Identity crises and the impact of 9/11: A postcolonial study of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Khuda Kay Liye*. Another woman known as Erica in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid struggles and mentally punched in the west. The contemporary issue is also unmasking the same issue in current society where a woman is tagged as commodity and her mental health is devalued by patriarchy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

The current study focuses on the novel by using the lens of Psychoanalytic Feminism. Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis* and Nancy Chodorow's *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* serve as the basis for the analysis. The research makes extensive use of secondary materials in order to gain important insights from these works. These works highlight that men's psychological inclination to control and oppress women is innate.

This viewpoint, which has its roots in Freud's psychoanalytic ideas, questions the conventional wisdom that gender is solely biological. Rather, it asserts that a person's psycho-sexual development which is influenced by both unconscious processes and cultural structures is what shapes their gender (Ramsey, 2000). According to Mitchell, Freud's ideas exposed the deeply embedded patriarchal worldview that both men and women internalize and come to accept as 'natural' or 'normal.' This approach aids in understanding how cultural, social, and psychological variables create gendered identities and behaviors rather than biological causes.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Beneath the Patriarchal Veil: Violence Begins at Home

The word "patriarchy" describes a social system in which men have greater access to opportunity and authority than women, who are frequently denied basic rights and placed in subservient roles. Sociologists believe that the perceived biological disparities between the sexes are the source of patriarchy, which is a social construct. Men are viewed as the main breadwinners under such a system, while women are usually expected to concentrate on household responsibilities, with their tasks restricted to housekeeping and childrearing (Macionis, 2012).

These strongly ingrained patriarchal ideals are apparent throughout the book, particularly in the way that a woman's independence is perceived as a danger to the ego and authority of men. Ayesha is a young lady who is committed to influencing the world. She assists victims of domestic violence at Insaaniyat (Humanity), a nonprofit organization. Her father first opposes her intention to work, stating, "Girls in our family do not work," even though she comes from an educated household (Khan, 2023, p. 10).

This claim illustrates how patriarchal standards influence family values and how women's roles are frequently viewed as unchangeable, unquestioned customs that are passed down through the generations. These culturally accepted behaviors are not only taught but also passed down, influencing how men and women interact (Nancy Chodorow, 1989). Not only does Ayesha's father undermine her independence by preventing her from pursuing her professional goals but he also manages her public character.

When Ayesha's husband, Raza Masood, makes fun of her wish to continue working after marriage, the topic of power and gendered expectations is further explored. In response to Ayesha mentioning keeping up her work at the charity, Raza responds by saying that women in their family don't work. According to Chodorow (1989), interactions between men and women are frequently based on power dynamics and domination rather than personal, egalitarian connections. Instead of being viewed as independent, self-defining people, women are usually viewed through the prism of men's expectations and wishes in this situation.

Another instance that illustrates the prevailing gender norms and male chauvinism in Pakistani society is the one where Ayesha's father, Safdar Khan, silences his wife, Ishrat, when she attempts to save their daughter. "I don't remember asking for your opinion, Ishrat," he says to her (Khan, 2023, p. 19). This disrespectful remark emphasizes Safdar's claim of dominance over his wife, showing that her sense of independence within the marriage is limited and that her voice is submissive. This kind of silence in many couples involves more than just rejecting an idea; it also involves influencing choices and, perhaps, regulating feelings. According to Pierre Bourdieu (2001), this type of behavior is known as 'symbolic violence' in which male power is reinforced by subtle, non-physical means of dominating. These acts are intended to maintain the power of inequality because the male partner frequently worries that letting a woman talk freely may upset the established dynamic (Benjamin, 1988). According to Chodorow (1989), men hold women in contempt because they perceive them as powerful beings.

Patriarchy's Puppets: The Cultural Programming

Men have been taught patriarchal cultures to maintain beliefs and actions that uphold their superiority over women. Gender roles are socially formed in these civilizations; cultural norms, social institutions, and traditions all contribute to the expectations of what it means to be male or female (Schippers, 2007, p. 87). Pakistani women are typically supposed to be submissive, obedient, and dependant while caring for their families, having children, and staying at home.

Safdar, Ayesha's father, disapproves of her choice to work at the beginning of the book. His constant worry about how people perceive him due to his inability to manage his daughter's life reveals his weak masculine ego and deeply ingrained patriarchal beliefs. He is only concerned about upholding his power and image in society and not about keeping his daughter safe. This demonstrates how a man's dignity and social identity are frequently threatened by a woman's independence. Psychoanalytically speaking, Safdar's demand for acceptance exposes a weak male ego that depends on maintaining established networks of power. Patriarchy, according to Benjamin (1988), works by establishing a division between submission and dominance, where the male figure must be dominant to maintain his sense of self. As seen by Safdar's statement, "Never let it be said that a Multani man cannot look after his family" (Khan, 2023, p. 11). This urge for control over women's life is closely linked to his sense of identity. The deeply ingrained norms of a patriarchal culture, in which a man's value is linked with his perceived authority over the actions and rights of women, are reflected in his remarks.

Raza's attitude towards women is greatly influenced by the aforementioned patriarchal norms, which he also displays. He degrades Ayesha by telling her that she will be his mistress. "You are unfit to be anyone's wife, even if you have hopes of being my wife" (Khan, 2023, p. 238-239). This remark is not just a jab at Ayesha. Instead, it reflects a broader societal expectation that women must be either good wives or the objects of men's whims. Gendered norms are not simply a discourse but a set of everyday practices framed by a matrix of power relations and such customs reinforce the cycle of dependency by influencing social actions and expectations for women (Bhattacharya, 2017). These deeply rooted cultural and psychological beliefs guarantee that women remain oppressed, sustaining a cycle of control and oppression. Both Safdar and Raza's actions show the continued effects of patriarchal systems as

they are the result of a culture that has normalized male supremacy and limited women's independence.

Forms of Violence against Ayesha: Depictions in the Novel

Pakistani society is deeply associated with patriarchal ideas, which guarantee women's subordination. Violence, gender prejudice, and institutionalized behavioral restrictions all contribute to the continuation of patriarchal dominance over women. According to Mitchell (2000), all forms of exploitation are incorporated into patriarchy. Horrible acts including honor killings, rape and sexual assault, sexual harassment, acid assaults, burnings, abduction, forced marriages, torture, and domestic violence are all part of Pakistan's violent culture. Ayesha experiences assault and abuse throughout the book, both physically and emotionally. Several males in her life make her endure the weight of masculine chauvinism and sexism.

She is forced to finally consent to marry Raza because of the unavoidable situations he has created. He forces her family to get Ayesha to marry him by subtly threatening them after taking their farmland. Instead of supporting Ayesha, Ishrat tells her daughter that all she has to do is endure his touch for a couple of years because men are tired easily (p. 56, Khan, 2023). She ultimately consents to marry him when her mother persuades her to do so, saying, "If marrying him will solve all your problems, I'll do it" (Khan, 2023, p. 64). Ayesha loses her independence and is pushed into a marriage since she didn't give her approval in the beginning.

Nevertheless she also experiences physical violence in the form of harassment and sexual assault. The term 'sexual harassment' describes intentional, persistent, and unwanted sexually suggestive remarks, gestures, or physical acts. Institutionalized hostility and a patriarchal mentality towards women lead them to be the most common victims of sexual harassment (Welsh, 1999). Raza makes Ayesha uncomfortable by brushing against her improperly and without her consent while "going inside her kameez, touching her bra strap" (Khan, 2023, p. 84). Men feel free to force their sexual desires on women without getting their permission because society sexualizes and objectifies them to the point that they are "mere sites of fascination."

This kind of approach develops an atmosphere in which harassment is seen as basically acting in a way that is "natural" or socially acceptable. Raza abuses her by violently grabbing her waist and causing her great agony at the engagement ceremony. She sighs, "[you're hurting me," because she can no longer bear the misery (Khan, 2023, p. 92). Similarly, when she shows up for a meeting Raza extends his arm and begins "deliberately pressing it against her breasts" (Khan, 2023, p. 97). Raza also abuses Ayesha verbally and physically, which is another kind of domestic violence. Raza physically abuses her and mistreats her on several occasions. In his wrath, he puts "his fingers around her throat" when he unexpectedly shows up in front of her in London (Khan, 2023, p. 232). Sultana (2010) claims that a male-dominant system that oppresses and dominates women is the root cause of many types of violence. Due to the careless attitude of state authorities and the reluctance or silence of women to speak out against such assault, it is considered acceptable. This mindset might result in more severe forms of rape and domestic abuse, which would further exploit and socially degrade women (Sultana, 2010, p. 10).

The fundamental idea of sexual violence is based more on power than sexual desire and is best understood as a component of gender inequality. According to certain

feminist theorists, males have traditionally used rape and the fear of rape to control women (Brownmiller, 1975). Similarly, when Raza kidnaps Ayesha in London, he constantly abuses and rapes her. “he violated her three times that day,” according to the novel (Khan, 2023, p. 239). In a patriarchal society, sexual assault and rape are seen as acts of revenge or retaliation. According to a common misunderstanding about rape, women are held accountable for supposedly increasing men's sexual appetites through their provocative behavior or clothing, or for rejecting social expectations (Roze, 2000). Ayesha, on the other hand, simply expressed her desire to choose Saqib over Raza. “I’ll continue to rape you, and after I’m done, I’ll have my servants rape you, and after they’re done, I’ll have my dog rape you too,” he adds viciously to Ayesha (Khan, 2023, p. 247). He invites his close buddies to make fun of her, humiliating her in addition to torturing her. Rape and other forms of sexual violence against women are especially common in patriarchal society because they allow males to maintain and establish their power and control over women. Sexual coercion was an essential dimension of the social relations between slave master and slave (Davis, 2012). This so-called “rape culture” endured beyond the particular circumstances of slavery (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 187). Additionally, according to Millett (2000), “sexual domination is probably the most widespread ideology of our culture and provides its fundamental concept of power” (p. 25). The main character, Raza, serves as a striking example of Millett's analysis of the key issue of power. In other words, Raza attempts to use his male dominance over her by raging and sexually assaulting her in an attempt to imprison and degrade her. In this sense, it treats Ayesha like a slave by establishing a master-slave relationship between them.

The Love That Burns: Raza’s Vitriolage

In Pakistan, a woman’s looks are her finest asset. Another important asset for a woman in Pakistan is her honour which must be guarded by her with her life (Khan, 2023). In a culture where a woman's value often relies on how beautiful she is, if damage occurs to a woman's face, it is considered to be an act of violence to deprive her of her dignity and social value. Acid assaults are a type of gender-based violence that especially targets women and aims to hurt them physically as well as destroy their sense of independence, self-worth, and social status. According to Calcini (2022), in certain nations, males use acid assaults as a means of controlling women, particularly when a woman's physical beauty plays a significant role in her search for a mate. These assaults are usually committed as retaliation against women who break societal expectations or reject a man's approaches, among other transgressions of established gender standards (Zia, 2013). Zia (2013) further adds that because a woman's worth is often strongly correlated with her appearance in many countries, a woman's face is frequently the target of these attacks (p. 18).

After turning down Raza's approaches, Ayesha is the victim of this violence in the book. Ayesha finally makes the decision to reject his proposal after at first being compelled by her parents into marrying him. One of the most frequent causes of acid assaults in many Asian countries is romantic or sexual rejection, where a woman's denial may be interpreted as a personal offense (Calcini, 2022). A violent argument results from this refusal, and Raza becomes enraged and calls Ayesha terrible names and then goes ahead and throws acid on her face. “Ayesha felt like something was eating her alive” (Khan, 2023, p. 103). Raza is unaffected by her cries and requests. He justifies this act of cruelty. He believes that Ayesha deserved to be punished. Raza

knew just how to ruin Ayesha's social and physical life by targeting her face. In Pakistan, a woman's beauty is frequently her most valued asset, and Raza intended to permanently damage her status by depriving her of it. According to Ayesha, in Pakistan, "nothing else matters in Pakistan except for your appearance" (Khan, 2023, p. 195). She is all too aware of this. Raza wanted to ruin Ayesha's most precious possession by deforming her.

Attacks like this cause emotional harm in addition to physical harm. The purpose of acid assaults is to deprive victims of their identity and ruin them (Calcini, 2022). There are both obvious scars and severe mental wounds from the stress caused by these attacks. Raza assaulted Ayesha with the intention of causing her to suffer for the rest of her life, not just once. However, Raza's brutality doesn't end with her scars. He follows her mercilessly to London, where he makes fun of her even more by claiming that "[b]urning you with acid wasn't enough." I hadn't finished my retaliation yet (Khan, 2023, p. 231).

According to Calcini (2022), anger and envy are frequently the primary causes of acid assaults. Raza's harsh and brutal remarks reveal his belief that he has the right to get revenge on Ayesha for turning him down. His actions also highlight the uncontrolled sexism that characterizes cultures that support or even celebrate violence against women. Since there are no consequences for their crimes, offenders feel untouchable in this unsettling circle. Men like Raza are motivated by this sense of invincibility, which enables them to continue abusing others without worrying about consequences. The character of Raza in Awaiz Khan's *Someone Like Her* (2023) illustrates the widespread existence of masculine power and authority with this terrible behavior. According to him, violence against women is a means of maintaining women's subordination, establishing control and authority, and punishing those who challenge the roles that society has assigned them. As a result of this terrible ideology, it is not uncommon that people like Raza ruin lives with no real implications, continuing the cycle of violence that impacts infinite women.

The Impact of Raza's Abuse on Ayesha's Identity

"Raza Masood had damaged her soul in along with ruining her appearance." (Khan, 2023, p.123) Raza mistreats Ayesha and spills acid on her face, totally disrupting her existence. She has lost not just her looks but also her individuality and self-confidence. According to Calcini (2022), a woman's identity is intended to be destroyed by deforming her looks. As a result, Ayesha experiences a serious identity problem since, in the perspective of those who gaze at her, she has transformed from a stunning woman into a terrifying monster equivalent to a zoo animal in captive. People are "watching her like she is an animal in the zoo" while she is out in public (Khan, 2023, p. 164). Ayesha lacks confidence and avoids social situations and public gatherings because she can feel people's intense stares burning her skin. "I want to be treated like a normal human being [and want people] to treat me like a human and not an animal spotted in the zoo," she protests (Khan, 2023, p. 173).

According to a recent study, people who survived vitriolage face constant prejudice from society, which makes them feel ashamed and anxious that people will look at or make fun of them. As a result, they are reluctant to leave their homes and are therefore constantly alone and isolated (Mittal et al., 2024).

Her heart has become tired of the world and her surroundings as a result of continuous victim blaming and isolation. As she gives up both her private and public lives, she no

longer finds anything exciting and no longer enjoys the joy of life she once did. Since she is unable to bear the pain and suffering that Raza has given her, she has become suicidal at this time, and her head is overflowing with suicidal thoughts and ideas. She begins imagining the sensation of cutting her wrists and how it would feel to let water mix with her blood (Khan, 2023). This is how she plans to put a final end to her life and ease her misery. She feels as though she can break free from an endless cycle of abuse, suffering, guilt, and humiliation in this way. According to Sharma (2022), survivors of vitriolage who had feelings of humiliation, embarrassment, regret and loneliness after the assault were more likely to have mental distress and consider suicide (Sharma et al., 2022).

Raza's harassment, however, has had psychological effects in addition to emotional and physical ones. Even after putting her past in Pakistan behind her and moving to London, Ayesha's inner demons still haunt her, and she continues to have hallucinations about Raza. After being left by Saqib and ravished by Raza, she finds another love and a genuine gentleman in Kamil, but she is unable to settle down with him because of the trauma of abuse and acid assault that is buried in her brain. She once gasped and "looked like she'd seen a ghost" while she was with Kamil (Khan, 2023, p. 212). It seems to be Raza, a ghost of him that continues to pain her, influencing her now and in the future.

Survivors of acid attacks suffer severe psychological effects, including loneliness, suicidal thoughts, and ongoing trauma (Azam, 2014). It also demonstrates her rising fear and anxiety that Raza, a mark from her past, may soon enter and ruin her life once more. The goal of an acid assault is to create permanent damage to the victim's face and body, causing them to suffer physically and psychologically, rather than to kill them. Acid assaults can have serious and long-lasting psychological effects and because of this, some victims may experience psychiatric symptoms for the rest of their life. The reason behind this is that the scars of these victims and damage serve as a constant reminder of their terrible fate (Bollineni, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Male chauvinism arises from society's male-dominated mentality and deeply rooted patriarchal ideas. Male chauvinistic views eventually develop as a result of patriarchal society's preference for males and idea of their authority over women. The same ideas that claim males have a natural desire to oppress women are the foundation of psychoanalytic feminism. However, gender-based violence is encouraged by prejudice and hatred against women. Ayesha endures immense pain and tragedies in the form of sexual assault, harassment, and domestic abuse in the book *Someone Like Her* (2023). She suffers the burden of her rejection of patriarchal society's male-dominated arrangement. At the conclusion of the book, she eventually stands up for herself by gathering the confidence to speak out against Raza after all the ups and downs in her life. She shows a scene of sunrise emerging through the darkness. With the aid of police officer Amna, she confronts Raza and soon files a police report against him, demonstrating her constant determination and resilience. Nonetheless, the book concludes on a positive note by giving an abused woman justice in a nation where men rule, such as Pakistan. Raza is arrested and faces serious accusations despite having an influential profile and connections.

Ayesha is awarded with Sitara-i-Imtiaz, an honorable award, for her bravery as the story comes to a dramatic finale. In the real world, though, the circumstances run

counter to Ayesha's ultimate destiny. In a country like Pakistan, it is extremely difficult for a woman who has faced rape or abuse to seek or receive justice due to deep-rooted societal and legal barriers. Patriarchal norms and male chauvinism often silence victims and protect perpetrators, making accountability rare. The justice system and societal attitudes largely favor men, discouraging women from speaking out. True change can only happen when these oppressive mindsets and patriarchal structures are dismantled, allowing for a fair and just society.

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