



RESEARCH PAPER

Stereotypical Roles and Sexist Language: A Feminist Stylistic Study of Selected Fictions of Sidhwa and Hamid

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempts to explore the feminist stylistic analysis of stereotypical roles and sexist language in Sidhwa's *An American Brat* (1993) & Hamid's *Exit West* (2017). The objective of this study is to investigate linguistic items to unpack the sexism in language and gender roles in the selected novels. The qualitative approach is utilized in this study. The research's data comprises words, phrases, or sentences, and discourses that express gender in the chosen novels. The data is analyzed by the researchers using the three-level analysis model proposed by Mills (1995). The study's findings demonstrate that while Hamid's *Exit West* promotes non-traditional gender roles by portraying Nadia as a pragmatic and rational character, Sidhwa's *An American Brat* exhibits gender stereotyping through the characters of Zareen and Cyrus. Because of this stereotyping, sexism is frequently applied to the female gender in Sidhwa's selected work and sparingly in Hamid's chosen fiction. By increasing future scholars' awareness of the part language plays in upholding or challenging gender norms, this feminist study will broaden their perspectives while stimulating their minds to a certain enlightenment that can snap the chains of gender stereotyping.

KEYWORDS Feminist Stylistic, Gender, Language, Stereotypical Roles

Introduction

Feminism is an ideology that boosts equal rights for women, who are usually considered as an oppressed gender. The fight for women's equality in society is the goal of feminism because many literary works typically depict women as weak and defenseless (Shapiro, 2017). Feminism strives for equality rather than the superiority of the underprivileged gender, and it does not discredit the other gender. Gibbons (1999) outlines the concept of feminism, its goal and its principles. Feminism is a philosophy that questions societal structures pertaining to the inherent worth status roles of men and women. The notion of feminism did not occur overnight. It has a proper background followed by the waves of feministic movements. According to Mills (2005), there are three waves of feminism. The first wave deals with women's fight for political equality. According to Green and LeBihan (2001), the second wave refers to the remarkable shift in feminist prominence that occurred in the late 1960s and expanded the goal of feminism to equality in other contexts, including the workplace, home and education. Third and contemporary waves of feminism are acknowledging that internal disparities among women are the result of racial, socioeconomic and religious influences and should not be disregarded. This feminist approach recognizes the variety and multiplicity of female perspectives. So, these feminism movements have diverged in order to recognize the unique plurality of female

identities because female differ from one another in variety of ways, including culture, belief and history.

Thornborrow and Wareing (1998) provide the definition of stylistics as “the study of style.” (p.2). Feminist stylistics is an area of inquiry that incorporates feminism with linguistics. Mills is widely recognised due to her renowned work *Feminist Stylistics* (1995). Feminist stylistics, which connects the discipline of literary as well as linguistics, focuses on assessing the ways in which feminist ideology is expressed through language choices (Mills, 2005). Feminist stylistics helps readers with a variety of issues and skills in textual analysis so that they can respond to queries posed, particularly from a feminist standpoint. According to Mills (2005), the feminist stylistics is a politically driven language style that raises consciousness regarding how gender is treated in the text.

The novels chosen for the present study are *An American Brat* (1993), written by internationally acclaimed Parsee author Bapsi Sidhwa and *Exit West* (2017), a well-known novel by Pakistani British writer Mohsin Hamid. *An American Brat* is the story of temperamental 16-year-old Feroza Ginwala and her life and experiences during her visit to America. Feroza’s mother is concerned over her orthodox attitude due to the influence of Pakistan’s mounting tide of fundamentalism. So, her parents send her off to America for a short stay with her uncle Manek. The ending of the novel highlights her mingling into the American way of life as she transforms into a strong and independent girl and takes the decision to prolong her stay in America. Wonderfully set in the backdrop of Zia’s regime, the novel sheds light on politics, migration and cultural conflicts. The second novel, *Exit West* revolves around the story of Saeed and Nadia, the inhabitants of an unnamed country on the verge of war. Beautifully woven in a war-torn country about two lovers who roam across the space in search of home, *Exit West* highlights the notion of ‘home’ as an illusion in global era. Hamid depicts a dystopian world where protagonists, Saeed and Nadia embark on a physical and psychological journey to demonstrate multi-layered experiences. The magical doors serve as the means for searching for a haven for immigrants. Ingrained in magical realism, *Exit West* critiques the contemporary and globalized world lauded with staunch nationalism, fundamentalism, xenophobia and racial attitude of natives towards immigrants and refugees. The novel primarily spotlights the themes of mass migration & globalization in the modern world.

Literature Review

According to Siregar et al. (2020), feminist stylistics offers readers a range of tasks and proficiencies in text analysis to address the issues raised, especially from a feminist perspective. Stylistics, a linguistic pattern shaped by society, aims to raise consciousness regarding gender representation in written works. In this field, linguistics and feminist theory are both studied (Siregar et al., 2020). Although Mills (1995) coined the term ‘Feminist Stylistics,’ Montoro (2014) clarifies that Mills (1995) is an appropriate person to credit for this. Several stylisticians who came before Mills followed a feminist approach. But as Montoro notes, Mills is the one who designed the phrase (Sinulingga et al., 2021).

Lakoff (1973) examined diverse social dialects of America and detailed different aspects of women’s language in her research. She maintained that the language used about women by men and the language women themselves habitually use both underline the subordination of women in society. According to her, women’s frequent use of intensifiers, tag questions, empty adjectives and fillers in conversation reveals their insecurity and lack of confidence. According to Simpson (1993), one of the most important contributions to the discussion of sexism that occurs in language is Spender’s (1980) theory of dominance. She

maintained that men create language in order to rule and manipulate women. Because of this, women's subjugation is evident in the language they speak.

Numerous noteworthy investigations have been conducted within the realm of feminist stylistics, and exposing gender sexism in texts of all kinds has piqued the interest of numerous researchers. The connection between language and a person's gender is investigated in Sunderland's (2004) work, which looks at the various methods by which language is employed to create and maintain gender identities. Sunderland (2004) underscores the ways in which language may be utilized to subvert traditional gender norms and advance gender parity by drawing on a variety of cultural situations and instances. Furthermore, a stylistic study was carried out by Kudus (2008) for the depiction of Malay women in the selected short stories of Dina Zaman. The goal of the study was to ascertain how Zaman employed language to highlight the experiences of Malay women in the chosen stories. Kudus (2008) also sought to assess whether the writer has refused or supported the stereotypical portrayal of characters. Denopra (2012) conducted a study by choosing Sara Mill's feminist stylistic framework to ascertain the difference between male and female characters authored by Kerima Polotan-Tuvera in her four first-prize-winning short stories. Denopra's findings suggest that the selected stories constantly prioritize the accounts and the consciousness of women across all analysis levels. According to Al-Nakeeb (2018), the separation of female characters in a corpus of a single text from *Final Flight* from Sanaa was statistically assessed with feminist theories by Sara Mills and a corpus linguistic device, Wmatrix. The study found that males were introduced with respect to their colors, talent, personality and degree of authority, while females were discussed in terms of outward appeal and sexuality. Yuan (2019) has conducted a study on *Feministic Analysis of Butterfly Jun* and his research examines that despite raising voices in favor of women, they are still treated as a marginalized group. This film's language rejected and ridiculed all of the anti-women ideas and perceptions. A feminist stylistic study was conducted by Sheikh et al. (2019) at the word level on a selection of short stories from the two collections Muneeza Shamsie's edited collection *And the World Changed* and Daniyal Mueenuddin's *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*. According to their analysis, the male writer employed more gender-biased language than the female writer, who depicted robust and autonomous female characters. Arslan et al. (2022) examine four books written by various authors and look into the ways in which language fluctuation is utilized to show gender distinction in order to portray situations that are both personal and factual. By using words that distinguish between masculine and feminine construction, the data gathered from numerical corpus-based analysis revealed that the bulk of adjectives used to signify females were gentle and sympathetic, while the words used to illustrate the male gender painted them as prevailing and in power. Furthermore, Qayyum and Syed (2023) undertake a corpus-based study to represent the male and female characters in the selected novel of Afghan American writer, Khaled Hosseini. Their findings foreground that males are depicted as robust and autonomous, whereas all the negative attributes are assigned to females; thus, males empower females with the aid of language. Kayani and Anwar (2022) in their study has pointed out how male and female characters are portrayed linguistically in connection to two body parts, eyes & face, in contrast to one another by building the corpus of Faruqi's *The Mirror of Beauty*. Their findings demonstrate that whereas men's bodily components are used to show off their physical prowess, aptitude and personality characteristics, women's physiques are broken to accentuate their sexuality and physical beauties. This study asserts that males are positively portrayed whereas women are portrayed as stunning and attractive natural objects.

The research indicated above sheds light on the fact that a large number of studies have already been conducted in the field of feminist stylistics in order to accomplish gender roles via language in different pieces of literature. The current study varies from previous

ones because the selected fictions have not yet been explored using the theoretical framework of Sara Mills, so this research tries to bridge the gap by attempting a comparative analysis of Sidhwa's *An American Brat* and Hamid's *Exit West* using Mills (1995) model of three level of analysis.

Material and Methods

Choosing an appropriate research methodology is crucial in any study's data collection procedure. The current study has utilized a qualitative approach to interpret the data. According to Creswell (2014), the qualitative approach provides insights and interpretations for issues pertaining to human existence. The data available for research are two selected fictions (*An American Brat & Exit West*) by Pakistani British authors: one from a male writer and the other from a female writer. This study is descriptive, thus employing the texts of both selected fictions to incorporate the textual stances to substantiate the viewpoint.

Theoretical framework

The present research aims to locate the gender roles in the chosen novels of Hamid and Sidhwa, and the researcher has adopted the feminist stylistic model of Sara Mills from her book *Feminist Stylistics* (1995) for the analysis of selected novels. This book serves as a foundational work in the domain of feminist stylistics. Other stylisticians emulated her use of the term. Word, phrase or sentence and discourse levels comprise the analysis model's three levels.

Analysis at world level

This level of analysis addresses instances of gender bias in the lexical word or individual items used. The basis for analyzing word choices is sexism in language. Sexist pronouns, improper use of generic address terms and disparaging remarks about women are examples of word choices that can be investigated (Mills, 1995).

Analysis at the sentence level

There is a widespread linguistic consensus that words should be examined "in relation to context" (Mills, 1995, p. 126) because words frequently fail to convey the whole meaning of their meanings. Based on the earlier research, Mills offers exact specifications for phrase-by-phrase text analysis. When analyzing phrases to potentially uncover features that are notably gender biased, the analyst should be conscious of metaphors and ready to use phrases, presuppositions, speculation, jokes, or humorous choices (Mills, 1995).

Analysis at the discourse level

According to Carter and Simpson (1989), discourse analysis should take into account both the macro-context of the broader social patterns as well as the micro-context of the effects of the words on sentences or turns of conversation. This third level of inquiry addresses fragmentation, writing style, focalization and genre mixing, thus, the vocabulary words as well as political ideology are connected at the discourse level.

Results and Discussion

The present study uses Mill's three level analysis model to execute a feminist stylistic analysis of the selected fictions of Sidhwa and Hamid.

First Level of Analysis: Word

Analysis at this level highlights gender discrimination that can be viewed through the use of individual items or words, in Sidhwa's *An American Brat & Hamid's Exit West*. According to Mills (1995), gender bias can be explored in the language with the aid of gendered pronouns, incorrect generic terms for address, and the use of sexist remarks against women.

Generic Pronouns

Mills (1995) characterizes generic variants as linguistic components that uphold the idea "of men as a norm and women as divergent" (p.87). She gives an example of the pronoun "he" that is commonly used to depict both males and females.

In *An American Brat*, Sidhwa utilizes many generic nouns throughout the novel, shunning explicit pronouns that expressly relegate gender roles to characters. The conscious oversight of gender-explicit pronouns adds a captivating layer of equivocalness to the story, permitting perusers to frame their translations of the characters without being compelled by traditional gender-related assumptions.

In chapter 5, Sidhwa used the pronoun **he** for the customs officer. As in the textual line: "*Customs inspector said, intent on his duty. He sounded hostile.*" (p. 50). This shows that the customs inspector is male. This is the common norm that an inspector would be a male-only, but it could also be a female.

Utilizing a male pronoun for the custom officer mirrors the imbued generalizations in the public eye, where certain professions are naturally connected with a particular gender. The text unpretentiously highlights that this assumption isn't innate but a social development.

In *Exit West*, Hamid tries to avoid this notion of sexist language by giving equal representation to both genders, as is evident in the chapter 1: "*Each of us has his own way Or her own way. Nobody's perfect. And, in any case-*" (p. 2). The above stance manifests that through the use of both pronouns, Hamid is giving importance not only to the male gender but also to the female one thus, and he is not viewing women through the mirror of men. Another example from the same chapter, "*This meant trying to show a client that his firm truly understood their business and see things from their point of view.*" (p. 2) Here, Hamid has employed a neutral pronoun because the client could be a male or a female. Through this line, the readers are introduced to the nature of the protagonist's job and his prowess as an agency employee.

Mills describes that gender-based pronouns are efficiently used at work where there is equal representation of both genders. She substantiates her viewpoint by quoting the examples of such occupations where there is little chance of advancement for females. Hamid in *Exit West* seems to portray Saeed's mother as a school teacher; this profession is not only respectable but also a degree of authority is associated with it as it is depicted through the following textual line, "*Saeed's mother had the commanding air of a school teacher, which she formally was.*" (p. 4). Actually, Hamid is in favor of gender-neutral language by assigning the role of teacher to his female character. He is reinforcing the concept that females can be equal to males in terms of their social status and that both men and women can equally enjoy the status of authoritative jobs. Basically, in *Exit West*, Hamid is refuting the stereotypical beliefs regarding the roles of males and females. This study is

in contrast with the research carried out by Arslan et al. (2022) who have probed such words that are promoting traditional gender roles.

Generic Nouns

One way to probe sexism in languages is to utilize generic nouns at the world level. Mills (1995) argues that it is common to “use the terms ‘mankind’ and ‘man’ when describing humankind as a whole” (p. 89).

In her novel *An American Brat*, Bapsi Sidhwa utilizes the expression *businessmen* (p. 179) inside the particular setting of males. Nonetheless, perceiving that the expression *businessmen* ought not to be restricted exclusively to male gender identity is fundamental. Truly, the business domain incorporates people of all genders, and ladies can be similarly proficient and fruitful as business experts. It is important to underscore that the abilities and commitments of people in the business world should be perceived and celebrated, regardless of gender. Sidhwa’s decision of phrasing fills in as a chance to feature the significance of language in forming discernments and to support a more comprehensive and gender-equivalent point of view in depicting professional roles.

Similarly, some instances of generic nouns from the text of *Exit West* are as follows:

“To make a *man* into meat.” (p. 4)

“With aggressive *men* who were the police.” (p. 10)

“To have a *man* over.” (p. 12)

“The *foremen* were constantly devising methods.” (p. 90)

Hamid has used foreman in the context of male. A foreman can equally be female. A female can effectively supervise other workers. Though Hamid has employed a lot of generic nouns in his selected fiction, he has also used neutral terms to depict both males and females, e.g., “He was aware that alone a *person* is almost nothing.” (p. 4). The term person indicates that it could be male or female.

Women as a Marked Form

According to Mills (1995), “men are presented in the language forms as an unmarked kind, while women are depicted as a marked form” (p. 87). Mills sheds light on the fact that affixes like ‘lady,’ ‘ess,’ ‘enne’ (p. 195) etc., has derogatory meanings when used in regard to females.

Bapsi Sidhwa has used many terms that specify the gender roles. The term *ayah* has been used to show that females are the household’s caretakers. Sidhwa has used the words like a *gardener* (p. 4) as male figures. She has used the term *ayah* (p. 2) depicting the character of women as women can only be the caretaker of the household and *gardeners* can only be male figures. These marked forms for women show the norms of society that are different for males and females. This is coordinated with findings of Al-Nakeeb (2018) in which females are viewed under the light of sexuality and conventional roles.

Sidhwa’s intentional utilization of these gendered terms prompts readers to think about the application of such linguistic decisions and the more extensive societal mentalities they address. By uncovering and testing these standards through her narrative, Sidhwa adds to a more extensive talk on gender roles, inciting readers to interrogate and rethink instilled perceptions regarding the roles and capacities of people given their gender.

In *Exit West*, there are certain instances that support such words which employ 'ess' affixes, e.g.,

"They met at the cinema during the interval of a film about a resourceful *princess*." (p. 5)

"And off-the-clock club *hostess*, taking quick steps." (p. 14)

"As though from the breezy planet of some blue-shimmering science fiction *priestess*." (p. 19)

These items like *princess*, *hostess* & *priestess* are often considered sexist, and they depict the deprecated position of women. Hamid though, tries to neutralize the notion of gender roles, yet he has utilized such terms that manifest male dominance and suppress the status of women.

Naming and Androcentrism

Mills (1995) argues about sexism in languages because they demonstrate the world from the point of view of males, and they also promote conventional beliefs pertaining to sex. According to Mills (1995), previous research has also revealed that certain terminologies associated with sexual activity are distinctively male-centric, suggesting that sex is passive for women and active for men.

The motif of sexual freedom is greatly highlighted in *An American Brat*. Khutlibai's fist fear regarding Feroza's visit to America is the sexual freedom prevailing there. This is evident from her dialogue in chapter 3, "*She's too innocent and young to be sent there. The woman was pregnant with unspeakable knowledge of the sexual license allowed to American girls and the perils of drink and drugs. You'll be rid of her anyway once she's married.*" (p. 21).

Here, Sidhwa reinforces Mills' (1995) point of view by showcasing that women are not supposed to have sexual freedom. Society thinks it is better to get them married to get rid of them. This has shown the feminist view that the solution to every problem for women is marriage because society does not give them sexual freedom as this freedom is only for men.

Hamid seems to subvert this notion of sexual roles in his *Exit West* through the portrayal of his female characters especially his protagonist. Nadia is deliberately involved with Saeed, though he is reluctant to have sex with her before marriage, e.g., "*I don't think we should have sex until we're married.*" (p. 27). Through this statement of Saeed, Hamid is undermining the stereotypical ideology about sex. Nadia is actively involved in sexual activity, taking it as an active thing, while Saeed is performing the role of passivity in regard to sex. Through the projection of Nadia as a bold character, Hamid rejects the conventional gender roles where females are the objects in the hand of the males, and they are unable to exercise their own will. This finding goes against Kayani and Anwar's (2022) study in which the image of women is one of tempting and stunning goods, thus, Hamid is negating the subversive position of women.

Metaphors for Women: Endearment and Diminutive

The prior research indicates that a great number of the phrases adopted by men to denote to women contain metaphors than terms utilized by women to describe men. Mills (1995) points out that diminutives and terms of endearment for women are often constructed using metaphors.

In *An American Brat*, the term *fat* (p. 34) is used for Cyrus's sister-in-law, which is objectionable. This is used just because of her figure. The term *thin bamboo-straight* (p. 34) has been used for Cyrus's mother because she is so slim. This comes from body shaming that women usually face in society.

When, on the one hand, Sidhwa has used body shaming terms for women, and she has used some strong words for men. She has shown the men as *stolid* (p. 38) and women as *docile* (p. 38). This shows sexism. Here, Sidhwa's fiction seems to endorse the findings of Qayyum and Syed (2023) by showing men as strong personalities and women as sensitive especially by using the word *docile* when Feroza's family leave her at the airport. The author projects the sensitive nature of women through Feroza, who starts crying at the airport with fear. Moreover, her uncle Manek calls her *idiot and stupid* (p. 42) as she is so silly. It is always shown that women do not know how to control their emotions. Through this word, Sidhwa shows how Feroza's uncle, Manek was so confident in the troubling situation while Feroza, a woman, was not. This showcases the male nature like they can handle things with their active minds, while women lose it as they do not know how to control their emotions and get scared.

In *Exist West*, the term '*whore*' (p. 20) is used for Nadia by burly men due to her motorbike driving because it is against the conventional gender norms that a woman drives a bike. *Whore* is a derogatory term that refers to the status of a woman as an object. Not only does the male dehumanize the female in *Exit West* by using obscene words, but also Nadia degrades Saeed by saying him an idiot, for example, "*She has told him not to be an idiot, said it harshly.*" (p. 67). This denigratory term manifests the violation of the traditional concept of gender construction. Showcasing Nadia as a pragmatic character, Hamid seems to question the sexism in language to some extent.

Second Level of Analysis: Phrase/Sentence

According to Mills (1995), there are certain criteria for interpreting text at a sentence/phrase level. The investigator should be conscious of ready-made words, assumptions, and interferences while decoding phrases to unmask features that are blatantly gender biased.

Ready-Made Phrases

Mills (1995) points out that there are some prefabricated phrases that have sexist connotations.

An American Brat owns multiple phrases that reveal male dominance. It has been noticed that men show their anger toward women and children to show their superiority. Men beat women when they do not act upon their orders. While *Exist West* appears to introduce the impartial situation in gender cases, *An American Brat* shows the typical mentality of men. They show their aggressiveness and anger by beating. Sidhwa indicates the male dominance and his awful side through this sentence when Feroza's father beats her ruthlessly. As evidenced in chapter 2, "*Driven to exasperation, Cyrus had once spanked Feroza when she was about four. He stopped only when he noticed the blood on her tiny clenched lips*" (p. 14). Through this sentence, Sidhwa pinpoints that men think that they can beat their children or women as they have the right to do so. She exposes the sexiest side of men as she reveals Cyrus aggressiveness by beating.

Exit West is rarely ingrained with such phrases that convey underline motives to pinpoint bias directed towards females, e.g., "*He hoped she would one day marry his son*

and be called mother by his grandchildren but this was up to them to decide.” (p. 96). This saying of Saeed’s father, on the one hand, confirms Nadia to the typical role of women as nurturers but on the other hand, it seems to convey equality in gender because marriage and producing children are private things in which the consent of both partners is required.

Presupposition and Inference

Brown and Yule primarily stress that contextual information is important in evaluating statements or phrases (Mills, 1995). This contextual information lays the foundation of beliefs about gender that are prevalent in society.

In *An American Brat*, the relationship of Zareen and Cyrus as husband and wife or Cyrus and Feroza as father and daughter is stereotypical and quite disturbing. Feroza’s father does not allow her to act in the G.C. school's play. He rudely addresses her daughter’s class fellow to show he would never allow her to act. As depicted in chapter 1, *“You know how it is – my father won’t like it. Please don’t come again. Don’t phone, please.” (p. 6).* This depicts that even though she could have thought to act in a play, her father’s anger did not allow her to do so.

Furthermore, it is shown that even though Zareen decides for Feroza to go to the USA, she asks permission from her husband. Cyrus’s statement, *“Okay, I’ll think about it” (p. 5)* depicts that no decision could be made without his husband’s permission. This finding stands in a sharp contrast with the study of Sheikh et al. (2019) in which robust and autonomous female characters are specialty of female writers. Here, the role of males is superior to women. Employing the above sentence, Sidhwa shows that women always need men’s approval and validation. Sidhwa is trying to manifest that in a patriarchal society, female is oppressed. Though she is independent, she still depends on her husband to make decisions. This is the common phenomenon of the phenomenon: the male is the decision maker, and the female is supposed to follow it.

In *Exit West*, Hamid has adopted the strategy of the equal status of both male and female e.g., *“His wife had been his best friend.” (p. 39).* This line is taken in the context of the relationship of Saeed’s father and mother. Both share a very beautiful bond of love in their marriage; Saeed’s father had never treated his spouse badly. There is the supposition that protagonist’s father is not dominating and authoritative like typical husbands, and the inference to this would be neither all women have to bear oppression and marginalization in marriage nor do they need to be submissive in a male-dominated society.

Third Level of Analysis: Discourse

As a feminist linguist, Mills (1995) states that the representation of characters is often stereotypical. Traditionally, women are portrayed in a way that highlights their subservient roles, while men are depicted to be saviors of humanity.

Characterization in *An American Brat*

Sidhwa has shown her females with blended characters. At times, she has shown ladies are strong; however, in the vast majority of the cases, she has portrayed male dominance as males know it all and females don’t.

Feroza

Feroza is the female protagonist of the novel. She has shown in reverse, biased and delicate lady. She has displayed a touchy, profound, and befuddled nature as she changed

a little issue into an enormous one when immigration officials caught her. Sidhwa has shown the female character of Feroza, who could not make her own decisions. Her uncle has called her many names, showing that Feroza is quite emotional and sensitive. These occurrences act as powerful outlines of her emotional delicacy and the effect of outside decisions on her confidence. As the story unfolds, Feroza's journey is self-revelation, testing cultural standards, and eventually getting comfortable with her in a world that frequently tries to characterize her in restricted terms because she is a woman.

Manek

Manek appears as confident, resolute, rational, and skillful. He has the ability to make decisions quickly and manage different people at once. This character is portrayed in the novel's numerous examples as a trustworthy man. Since arriving in America, he has developed an entirely laid-back temperament. He has served as an example for Feroza on how to behave when she is alone and apart from other people. However, a careful examination of Manek's personality reveals underpinning cultural norms and presumptions.

Despite his strong will, Manek's decision to marry a Pakistani girl reflects the stereotypical ideas about men that are deeply ingrained in Eastern social structures. This decision supports the belief that women, as Feroza puts it, are ill-suited to live freely and need men's guidance and presence. Despite Manek's unique strength, his choice to enter into a traditional marriage upholds traditional male norms and reflects a broader cultural perspective that restricts women's autonomy and potential.

Characterization in *Exit West*

In *Exit West*, Hamid has painted such female characters that do not comply with the Mills' notion. Here, this study is offering a contrast with the study of Sheikh et al. (2019) as Hamid's female characters are strong, bold, independent, and decision-makers while male characters mirror the image of sensitive, emotional and less pragmatic roles.

Nadia

Nadia is a towering figure in the novel. Hamid introduces her to his readers as a young woman in a black robe. She has a beauty mark on her neck. Though she is carrying a black robe all over her body, she doesn't cover her head with head cloth. She drives her own bike. She lives alone in the upper apartment of the widow. She has a robust, pragmatic, and bold personality. She is an adventurous and rebellious woman who endorses migration as a path to a secure and bright future. Nadia doesn't conform to conventional gender roles in any way.

Saeed

Saeed is a male protagonist of *Exit West*. He is a young man who belongs to a Muslim family. He is his parents' only child, so they pamper him a lot. He is often confused and nervous while making quick decisions. The tragic circumstances of war compel him to adopt the way to flee from his country of birth, but consequently, he gets affected psychologically because his father refuses to accompany him for migration. He is not painted as a strong, autonomous, and independent man rather he is depicted as an emotional person. During his journey to various places, he becomes extremely devout because he finds it the sole way to reconnect the relations; he has lost due to migration. Hamid refutes the traditional roles assigned to males while weaving Saeed's character.

Conclusion

The aim of the research is to examine words, phrases and discourses by investigating linguistic elements used by Sidhwa and Hamid in their chosen works, as well as to unravel the sexist language and gender roles in Sidhwa's *An American Brat* and Hamid's *Exit West*. Under the light of Sara Mills three level model (1995), the present study has been concluded that Sidhwa has employed linguistic items to dove into keen points of view in which stereotypical gender roles advance sexism in language. Through *An American Brat*, she has investigated how patriarchal norms limit women's independence. Moreover, she has revealed insight into the severe idea of conventional gender roles. Through Feroza's encounters, Sidhwa has uncovered the unbending gender roles common in the Pakistani and American social orders. Feroza continually wrestles with cultural assumptions that direct the way in which she ought to act as a lady. She is supposed to be submissive and loyal and adjust to customary gender standards. Nonetheless, Feroza rebels against these generalizations and makes progress toward freedom and self-articulation. But Hamid in *Exit West* paints the picture of such gender roles which are not stereotypically constructed. Being a male writer, he minutely promotes sexism but majorly, he is in the favor of gender parity. By picturing Nadia as a strong, complicated, and progressive woman, he has used her as a representative to challenge obsolete roles. With his female characters, Hamid has used specific language choices that make them stand out unique from other women. This opposes the study of Sheikh et al. (2019) in which there is more utilization of sexist language by males authors compared to female ones. Hamid thus attempts to minimize the use of sexist language in *Exit West* while emulating the atypical gender roles.

Both writers expose the fabrications spread by sexism and gender norms through unique storytelling techniques. Their characters' struggles against societal conventions are illustrated in nuanced ways, encouraging readers to examine these standards for themselves. Moreover, this study will help future scholars in comprehending the sexist ideology at play in traditional gender roles.

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