RESEARCH PAPER

Female Agency and Communality: A Social Role Study of Hussain's *Rubies for a Dog: A Fable*

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Hussain's "Rubies for a Dog: A Fable", keeping in view Social Role theory to study how Samira, the protagonist, showcases agency and communality. Samira, the only daughter of Grand Wazir, seeks to help her father by finding out the dog with twelve rubies studded in its collar by travelling alone to Nishapur. Employing qualitative content analysis, the paper traces the propagation and subversion of gender roles, gender stereotypes, female agency, and communality. The result reveals that women can both be agentic as well as communal; they possess the strengths to accomplish great things if the restrictions on them are lifted. This text can also be studied for its portrayal of male agency and vulnerability and a comparative study with another work of a western female author which can provide an interesting insight into how the dynamic of female agency and communality works in eastern and western worlds.

| **KEYWORDS** | Social Role Theory, Gender Stereotypes, Social Roles, Agency, Communality, Gender Roles |

Introduction

A stereotype is an idea or preconceived notion about a person or a thing. Some attributes are associated with a particular social group and the members of the group are then expected to possess those characteristics and they function according to the associated ideas. The word, stereotype, is frequently used with a connotation for something untrue. Some ubiquitous stereotypes include gender stereotypes, religion, race, nationality, social class stereotypes etc. Gender stereotypes are constructed ideas about the qualities that a female and male possess as different genders and then they are expected to act accordingly. Females are considered physically and emotionally weak, expressive and homemakers while males are deemed assertive, higher in status and more intellectual.

Gender stereotypes are different in cultures and societies across the world. These stereotypes confine the members of a society to certain labels and the members breaking these labels are deemed nonconformists; they become rebellious in the eyes of society. Gender roles are unharmful and they have dangerous consequences in the long run. For instance, women who are limited only to house chores and nurturing are overburdened by these social responsibilities and are less likely to fulfill their dreams. Also, men, being the providers and heads of the family, are burdened by the workload too. Literature has presented these gender stereotypes and roles in different works and some authors have subverted these roles as well.

Most females are presented as objects of love and they show obedience to their male counterparts. In *Death of Salesman* by Arthur Miller, the wife Linda Loman is a typical

representation of a Postmodern American wife who is submissive and obedient to husband. In contrast, Shakespeare subverted the gender roles in Macbeth, and he blended masculinity and femininity because he believed that people could possess traits of both genders. It is believed that the gender roles stemmed from the Victorian era. In the 19th century, women were not allowed to publish their writings and were restricted only to house chores and childrearing whereas, men were allowed to perform public duties. Female writers used pseudonyms to publish their works in the Victorian era.

In a word, social roles are the responsibilities and behavior which are the result of the status of a member in a particular setting or a group. A female can be a student, a daughter, a mother, daughter-in-law, and a homemaker at the same time. Social roles are reinforced by people in our closer vicinity and society. One of the theories that talks about the social and gender stereotypes is Social Role theory proposed by Alice H. Eagly and Wendy Wood. Social Role theory was discussed by Eagly and Wood in the 1980s. Alice H. Eagly is a social psychologist, and her research studies are primarily based on social psychology and personality psychology. Wendy Wood is a psychologist born in the UK. Her research work primarily focuses on habits, behaviors and the psychology of gender. By employing the theory this research paper seeks to study the gender roles assigned to women based on their social roles. Social roles are certain responsibilities and behaviors that are attributed to the male and female genders by society. These roles are carried out by men and women and thus become gender roles.

According to Eagly and Wood (2016), the theory's key principle is that differences and similarities arise primarily from the distribution of men and women into social roles within society (p. 459). In addition, the theory highlights that those who are in domestic roles were rated as more communal and less agentic than those in the employees' role. With more and more women in the labor market since the 1970s and the feminist movement, it is surprising that studies continue to show that there is a tendency to view women with communal qualities and males with agentic qualities (Eagly & Steffen, 1984, as cited in Dulin, 2007, p. 106). Perceivers stereotypically associate men with agentic goals and women with communal goals. Agentic traits include self- assertion, growth, and mastery, while communal traits involve selflessness, concern for others, and a desire for connection (Eagly & Steffen, 1984, p. 736). In the 1980s, Social Role theory emerged as psychologists began researching behavioral differences between men and women. The theory suggests that these beliefs stem from observing men and women's social roles, reflecting society's division of labor and gender hierarchy (Eagly et. al, 2000, as cited in Eckes &Trautner, 2000, p. 123).

Also, gender roles shape people's self-concepts, leading to gender identities — individuals' sense of being female or male. These identities form as people internalize cultural meanings linked to their sex. However, individuals vary in how much they incorporate gender roles into their self-concepts and which aspects they adopt (Eagly & Wood, 2016, p. 468, as cited in Wickramasinghe et. al, 2016, p. 468). It is a social psychological theory which states that the differences and similarities between men and women are due to the social roles assigned to them since childhood. In the present study, Samira, the only daughter of Grand Wazir challenges the dominant stereotypes by defending her father and proves that women could be both agentic and communal.

Literature Review

Social Role Theory proposed by Eagly and Wood (1980) explores how individuals' behavior, beliefs, and attitudes are shaped by the roles they occupy in society. This theory posits that societal expectations associated with different roles influence people's actions, contributing to the formation of gender, cultural, and occupational identities. Examining

roles helps understand the dynamics of social interactions and the impact of societal structures on individual development. Forsyth et al. (1997) studied the partialities present in the leadership roles due to the stereotypes attached to men and women in a society. Leadership styles used were task-oriented leadership and relationship-oriented leadership. Attitude towards Women Scale was used to assess the response of the men and women in liberal and conservative groups made by the researchers (p. 99).

The results suggested that the judgement about women leaders was harsher by the people having more stereotyped attitudes towards women. Also, the conservative group liked the women leader to be task-oriented rather than relationship-oriented because that makes the women act masculine by performing tasks which are generally carried out by men while relationship-oriented style makes the leader more friendly (p. 101). This shows the stereotype that men are agentic and being relationship-oriented makes women to be communal which is women's trait.

Furthermore, Steinmetz et al. (2014) explored the effect of social roles in Germany as Western, independent culture and Japan as Eastern, interdependent culture (pp. 4-5). The hypothesis that men are more agentic without role information and within male dominated roles was true for both Germany and Japan but the results on communality were different in both countries. Germans perceived men more agentic and women more communal in male-dominated areas while considered the men more communal in female-dominated areas. Japanese partakers considered men more agentic in situations where neither a female nor a male performs a role but the participants perceived men and women agentic in roles dominated by men and also by women. Communality was perceived differently as Japanese considered men and women both communal because it is typical of Japanese culture. Communion in Japan is not gender specific (pp. 11–13).

Harrison and Lynch (2005) studied the gender roles and stereotypes in regard to athletes and the sport they participate in, also they examined the approval rate and judgements of people based on whether athletes participated in gender traditional or gender non-traditional games (p. 227). The participants in the study were given an article to read on male and female athlete playing football, basketball and cheerleading. Therefore, the data from the results suggested that the role an athlete perform in games influences the gender role orientations not the gender of an athlete itself. Female football and basketball players were considered more agentic than the cheerleading females. Also cheerleading male were considered more communal than the male football and basketball players. It was also found that external factors such as family pressure and financial reward made the athletes participate in gender traditional sports and internal factors made some athletes participate in gender non-traditional sports (p. 235).

Hentschel et al. (2019) researched the prevalent gender stereotypes such as assertiveness as an agentic trait and nurturing as communal trait. The stereotypes like assertiveness, leadership, sociability and concern for others are still lurking in society. The results showed that the male raters thought of themselves as more competent and assertive; likewise, the female raters rated other females and themselves as sociable, emotionally expressive and less agentic than the males. But they also rated the females as equally competent and independent as men and the men were rated more social as well by the male raters. The results shed light on the existence and change in traditional stereotypes (p. 13).

Lastly, Brosi et al. (2016) studied the judgments arising from the expression of pride in a male and female. The studies found that showing pride in one's achievement can have both good and bad effects. On the positive side, it can make people see you as more capable and good at leading tasks. On the negative side, it can make people think you are less caring

and more likely to be hostile. Interestingly, these effects are different for men and women. When women show pride, it makes them seem more capable; however, for men, showing pride does not change perceptions of their capability much. When it comes to being seen as caring, pride has the same effect for both men and women. So, while pride can be more beneficial for women in some ways, it can also be more harmful in terms of how hostile they are perceived to be (p. 1325).

The studies show the difference between the genders in different fields like sports, jobs, emotions display and people belonging to different cultures based on agency and communality which gives birth to gender stereotypes like assertiveness which is believed to be a male trait and sociability; a female trait. Besides showing the general assumptions about men and women, the researches illustrate the change in stereotypes where people have started to see men as more friendly and expressive and women as more assertive which discredits the traditional stereotypes and displays a change in society. This research is in line with the previous scholarly studies as it scrutinizes and shows the presence of agency and communality in Samira; the protagonist of Hussain's "Rubies for A Dog: A Fable" (1995), a brave girl who breaks the traditional stereotypes by carrying out activities which are agentic in nature and traditionally associated with men; travelling alone, making decisions and showing her intelligence. Through these assertive as well as communal traits she saves her father proving the stereotypes attached to women; wrong.

Material and Methods

By employing qualitative content analysis, "Rubies for a Dog: A Fable" by Shahrukh Hussain is interpreted and scrutinized keeping in view Social Role theory to examine how Samira as a female protagonist showcases both agency and communality. The study investigates the propagation and subversion of gender roles through Samira's character. Hussain is a Pakistani-born British writer; skilled in writing fiction, folklores, nonfiction and screenwriting. Her renowned works are *Women Who Wear the Breeches: Delicious and Dangerous Tales (1995), Handsome Heroines (1996), A Restless Wind (2013), The Goddess: Power, Sexuality, and the Feminine Divine (2003).* Her screenplay, "In Custody", was nominated for an Oscar award. The short story introduces the character of Samira who is determined to save her father's life. Her father is a Wazir and is imprisoned by the materialistic emperor Azad Bakht. The Wazir informed the king about a dog with twelve rubies studded in its collar to divert his attention from the precious and important ruby he was obsessed with, because it is unlikely for a king to delve deep in worldly possessions leaving the country's affairs unattended. The emperor could not bear a single word against his valuable possession and demanded the Wazir to be put in the dungeon.

Thus, Samira, the only daughter of Grand Wazir, is not gratified with jewels and bounties of palace but seeks to help her father by finding out the dog with twelve rubies in its collar. However, the father is not ready to allow his daughter because he thinks that a son could accomplish this task finely and a daughter, weaker than a son, might hurt herself. Samira is firm in her decision and is confident enough to travel alone to Nishapur. She changes her attire and cuts her hair to look masculine and to carry out her mission. Lastly, the Wazir permits her, with tears in his eyes, for the journey. She uses her intellect in dealing with a businessman in Nishapur and meets the owner of the dog, making him come with her to save her father. In the story Samira realizes her powers, she discovers her identity and proves that women can achieve many things.

Results and Discussion

Agency and Communality in Samira's Character

The text "Rubies for a Dog: A Fable" by Shahrukh Hussain (1995) is studied in this section to interpret the portrayal of Samira's agency and communality and the prevalent gender stereotypes attributed to her due to her social role. Hussain (1995) states:

"She refused to sit idle in the halls of her father's sumptuous mansion while he, the provider of all this luxury, languished in a dank cell with chains locking both his limbs and his lips" (p. 1).

These lines clearly show that Samira was not a woman to sit back and do nothing. Her agency is shown by her strong willpower and assertiveness. She has the ability to say no to luxuries that are loved by women. Samira is not a lazy person who loves the comfort of her father's mansion, but a determined person who loves to contemplate and take actions. Additionally, her concern for her father, the Grand Wazir is also evident. She, being a daughter, is worried for her father suffering in the dungeon; she is sympathetic and desires the welfare of her father. She is trying to be helpful. In addition, Hussain (1995) writes:

"When Samira's father refused her help because she was a woman, she felt humiliated and useless. She crept back to her castle and wept, and cursed the narrow vision of men" (p. 1).

Here, the father does not trust his daughter of being capable enough to help him. He does not see her as someone decisive and goal-achiever and refused her because she is a woman. It depicts the preconceived notion that women cannot be agentic. Also, the sensitive and sentimental side of Samira is shown clearly by the use of words such as "humiliated", "useless", "wept" and "cursed". These words show that a woman readily feels self-pity and becomes emotional which includes anger and sadness in Samira's case. Moreover, Hussain (1995) mentions Samira's communality by saying: "He was grateful for the food she had sent" (p. 1). This line clearly tells that women are responsible for cooking and making men happy and content. The men will only be grateful to them if they comply with everything they command. Samira, as a daughter, sees herself responsible for cooking. According to the Social Role theory, cooking is a communal trait. Society has divided women on the basis of these communal traits and when these traits are acted upon by the people, they become gender stereotypes. In an additional dialogue, Hussain (1995) states:

"Yes, but I would rather serve the living than the dead,' she replied. 'I have lost my mother; I am desperate to keep my father. So please, tell me why you are here" (p. 2).

These lines describe the wittiness of Samira. She is wise and clearly knows how to respond to questions which can provoke one to get emotional. She keeps herself composed and intelligently chooses to help her father, rather than sit at home and do nothing. These are all the characteristics which are attributed to men. Nevertheless, Samira also has these traits and she is not a man so it showcases the possibility of women being agentic. Additionally, her desperateness to defend her father shows her communal side. Furthermore, Hussain (1995) writes in another instance about Samira's agentic traits: "The Wazir sighed. He was bursting with pride at his daughter's bravery and quite overcome by her devotion and determination" (p. 2).

Hussain (1995) also inculcated nonverbal language to show Samira's communality: "Samira shuddered and put her hands to her father's lips" (p. 3). Moreover, women are

considered to get scared easily. Here, Samira shivers at hearing the horrors of the dungeon; her frightened side is shown which shows that women are more expressive about their fears while men keep their fears hidden. Besides the above dialogue, Hussain (1995) mentions: "And a life in this cell is no great hardship when you send me wonderful food each day and all the parts of my body are intact" (p. 3). Here again, the kindness of the female protagonist is highlighted. Samira is the daughter and it is her duty to prepare good quality food for her father. She prepared it due to her concern about her father's health and she being a woman was responsible for cooking and other house-chores for her family. Her communality is clearly depicted here. Nonetheless, Samira's agency is highlighted by Hussain (1995): "Samira began to lose her nerve, but recovered and spoke with greater determination than before" (p. 3).

The agentic traits of Samira are conveyed in this line. She knows how to control herself even if the circumstance is not in her favor. She is sentimental as every other human being but has the power to subdue her emotions. Also, she can easily turn herself to a calm and confident person after facing any rejection. Because she is a goal-oriented person, she does not let her emotions cloud her judgment. She knows the art of showing determination before her father so he can allow her or trust her plan. Additionally, Hussain (1995) writes:

"Two strangers stand more chance than an army: retorted Samira. An army would put them on their guard. A caravan would alert them to infinitely greater treasures than one body can carry. But a single young man with an old attendant will pose no threat to warrior tribes. Besides, we know from the stories of the great minstrels that wit wins many a battle before it is ever fought"(p. 4).

In these lines, the wit and intelligence of Samira is revealed. A woman is equally intellectual and genius like a man and it is manifested in these lines. Samira is knowledgeable and well read. She knows the tactics to journey alone. Women, ususally, are not allowed to travel alone because they can get hurt in any way possible, which is why they must be accompanied by a male travel partner to protect her. But in Samira's case, it is different. She is a strong woman who knows how to keep herself safe and reach her destination while using her brain. She is courageous and brave. She possesses agentic qualities because she is clever in her responses. Samira's agentic behavior is understandable from the dialogue: "He could not deny this young woman, this brave and wise young woman" (Hussain, 1995, p. 5). Here, Samira, after sacrificing many things, was recognized to be brave and wise by her father. But it was her ability to make her father believe in her wisdom and bravery. She used facts and responded cleverly that is why Grand Wazir was ready to bless her or realized her true strengths that remained hidden because of her gender.

A woman is never encouraged to show her wisdom or valor and her opinion is mostly rejected. So, after much effort her father acknowledged her fortes. Another instance of nonverbal communal gesture is used by Hussain (1995): *Samira threw her arms around her father. Tears filled her eyes and, promising him she would remember all the advice he had given her over the years* (Hussain, 1995, p.5). These lines show the expressiveness of Samira as she cries after embracing her father; her father does not cry because his being a man does not allow him to express feelings as per the society's norms. Hussain (1995) comments on Samira's wisdom by saying:

"She would need provisions, merchandise for trade, gifts to pacify the nomad robbers and other brigands. And gold coins and gems, which she had sewn into the stiffened hems of her coat and other robes" (p. 5).

These lines project the independence of Samira and her use of insight to tackle all the

problems that may come her way. She has organized everything for her journey and knows strategies to deal with robbers that might appear during her travel. She is doing everything that is considered to be a man's expertise and she is breaking away all those stereotypes. The communality of Samira is presented by Hussain (1995) in this dialogue:

"I would like to help you, said the merchant, because I admire your effort. You combine wisdom and courage with a soft heart and single-minded dedication. I didn't know women like you existed" (p. 7).

Lastly, in these lines Samira's agency and communality both can be seen. She is admired by the merchant for her valor, her zeal for the journey to far off places. Her softness of heart is admired and her wisdom is lauded by a man. She is persistent that is why she is successful and is revered. In her mission she showed both her sides–her gentle self and her stronger self. Therefore, she proves to be a woman who can have agentic as well as communal traits and through these traits she destroys the label of women being communal only. She has demonstrated that women can be assertive, can complete tasks perfectly and are decisive.

Prevalent Gender Stereotypes

"I will not risk your life by telling you what happened. If I had a son, he would do what is necessary to clear my name. But I cannot send a daughter" (Hussain, 1995, p. 1).

In these lines, the Wazir has taken a step to assign a role to his daughter. She is a woman and that is considered her weakness. The father has an immense influence on generating gender roles in his society and he being the patriarch of the family allocates the roles that the women will carry out. Samira's social role and her father's supervision demand her to stay at home and enjoy the luxuries only. Also, her gender is expected to behave weak, submissive and less intellectual because women are assigned these attributes by the patriarchal society. Furthermore, Samira's concerns are shared in another dialogue:

"If I visit my father, she thought miserably, I will only remind him that he has no son while I, his wretched daughter, incapable of helping him, remain ensconced in his mansion, swathed in silk…. man of noble birth and without character" (Hussain, 1995, p. 1).

These lines show the labels attributed to women. They are thought to be made for gold jewels and houses; their happiness derives from the luxuries and bounties only. But Samira is against all these luxuries and does not desire to be limited to the four walls only. Hussain (1995) comments on Wazir in additional dialogue showcasing the prevalent stereotype: "He was grateful for the food she had sent and he did not wish to impose a visit on her, but he needed to know she was safe and well" (p. 1). This line describes the major duty that is assigned to a woman; cooking. It was the role assigned to Samira to cook food for her father and it was her duty which she could not deny. The labor that is specified for a woman is inside her house; it is her duty to take care of her family members, which give birth to gender roles. She has only adopted this role of cooking out of concern and love for her father. She denies staying at home and enjoying the riches. Also, the line highlights that men are free to impose anything on women. Women act with men's permission women and are not allowed to act as they wish.

Moreover, Hussain (1995) states:

"Yet she hated every part of herself. In a rage, she picked up a small dagger and began to rip away her clothes………I'm still here: it taunted. Still beautiful and still female. Now what will you do to deny me?" (p. 1).

In this line by Hussain, Samira is shown frustrated with herself and her body. She starts to hate her femininity because of which she is not given freedom. Men are responsible for restraining women to the home only. This restriction results in greater damage to the woman. Samira only camouflages herself as a man only to defend her father; the patriarch of her family, but she proves her strength as a female by saving the Grand Wazir in the end. Additionally, Hussain (1995) says: "I am her sworn brother and therefore your son. I am to be your champion and free you from this odious place" (p. 1). In this dialogue, Samira has disguised herself as a man to save a man; her father. She is able to achieve her goal by losing some part of herself. Women have to lose something in order to gain their freedom and discover their identity. She knew that by changing her appearance to a man's could help her because her role as woman was to sit in the safe walls of home and prepare food.

Moreover, the words "son", "champion" shows that the society believes only a son can be a victor and can achieve big things. These beliefs have generated gender stereotypes which are then acted upon. Beauty is necessary for a woman according to a man; Hussain (1995) highlights this: "You have cut your beautiful hair, the legacy of your mother, and you've given it up for me. It must have broken your heart" (p. 2). In this dialogue, the father has emphasized Samira's hair that is the sign of her beauty. Women are the demonstrations of beauty, so they must preserve it because they are valued and respected on the basis of their beauty. Their talent is not valued, needed or recognized. The Wazir asks Samira not to endanger her life which means to sit at home and do nothing because her place is her home. As a father he wants the safety of his daughter but at the same time he is also restricting her freedom. Furthermore, the author writes: "I want to go to Nishapur to find the dog with the ruby collar. I want your permission and your blessings" (Hussain, 1995, p. 4). Here, it is shown that a woman needs the approval of the patriarch to do something. Even if they are doing something for their betterment they must ask for permission. Without this approval they are bound and are not allowed to move freely. Samira, too, being a daughter requires the approval and blessings of her father to carry out the journey for him. She cannot go on her own. "Ah, Samira, Samira, lamented the Wazir, "the lack of a mother has done you more harm than I ever imagined" (Hussain, 1995, p. 5).

If a daughter does something against her gender roles, she is deemed rebellious and nonconformist. There must be someone to keep a check on them and tame them because they might turn rebellious. The duty of a mother is to take care of her children. If something goes wrong with the children, only the mother is blamed. The absence of Samira's mother has done her harm according to her father and she must be disciplined by another female. This belief also generates a gender stereotype about the women that they are the ones accountable for keeping a check on the children or ensuring their good behavior. Besides, Hussain (1995) also says:

"But people think a woman's body is frail and vulnerable—I concede that. That is why I have to dress like this. Isn't it ironic that I have to dress like a man in order to discover my potential?" (p. 5).

These lines show the difference between a man and a woman on the basis of their strengths, which becomes the reason for division of labor; women are given house chores because they do not need much strength and men are given heavy manual jobs. To carry out this heavy work Samira has to disguise herself as a man only to prove her strengths, because as a woman she is labelled weak and would not be allowed to realize her potential. Moreover, Hussain (1995) expresses: "I didn't know women like you existed. 'Perhaps,' murmured Samira, 'they are not often given the chance" (p. 7). Firstly, a woman's potential is overshadowed by gender stereotypes and mostly men are unconscious about the skills that a woman could have. They see women with the eye of labels attached to them. The merchant

is unaware of the skills of women because he is accustomed to seeing women as homemakers only.

Samira knows the constraints put on her and the hurdles she went through to be allowed for the journey. Women are less likely to be given a chance to prove their talents. Samira believes that if women are given more chances, they are likely to prove that they also possess many skills. These lines also show the gender hierarchy, she must dress like a man to be allowed because of their position and higher status men are allowed to do anything and can roam freely. Every big position is held by men in this short story. In another dialogue, Hussain (1995) shows dominant stereotype regarding women being saviors of men:

"In my country poets write of a little white dove called Samira who proved her friendship by travelling far and wide to repay a human who once saved her life. It strikes me that you have done the same" (p. 7).

Here, the merchant talks about a "small" bird that saved a person, Samira is compared to the bird for being a savior. Additionally, Husain (1995) says: "Shame, Father, laughed Samira. 'You have very little faith in your daughter" (Hussain, 1995, p. 8). This line shows that men generally have very less faith in women; they hardly trust women because of the gender stereotypes built around them. They do not believe in women becoming victorious because they have always seen women as homemakers, due to the social roles. Daughters are never trusted to achieve big things because their gender is measured weak. Samira has not fully internalized her social role that is why she has shown that gender roles can be diverted and women can attain equality with men. Hussain (1995) concludes the story on a happy note. She states that,

"A daughter: thought Samira alone in her chamber that night, smoothing her soft fabrics to her skin, inhaling the perfumed atmosphere of her room, slipping between the silk of her bedclothes, `who is very happy to be a woman now that she has shown what womankind can achieve" (Hussain, 1995, p. 8).

Here, Samira proves the social standing of a woman that is more than a mere homemaker. Although she disguised herself as a man, her biological sex remained the same and she achieved her goal wearing a man's clothes. Nevertheless, she utilized her own wisdom and strengths that were overshadowed by the stereotypes associated with her gender. In these lines, she enjoys the comfort of her home because she does not hate the riches and femininity but abhors the suppressions that come with her biological sex. She is pleased with the achievement of saving her father. She does not completely adopt gender roles and thereby, shows that gender roles can be subverted because they are built by society's perception about the genders, and are not natural.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the presence of agentic as well as communal traits in the character of female protagonist, Samira, verifies that women can be agentic and communal at the same time in a particular culture. Family plays a big role in constructing gender roles and attributing certain traits to men and women. Samira's father played a huge role in retaining such gender roles. Furthermore, the social role of Samira as a daughter resulted in gender roles like, a homemaker, but she denied them. Although she was taking pleasure in velvets, chiffons and perfumes at the mansion, that was not her only identity. She was something different and for the discovery of her strengths she went on a journey which she successfully completed. Gender stereotypes are propagated in "Rubies for a Dog: A Fable" (1995), where women are considered the weak part of society, emotionally expressive and objectified by

the men. Men control everything, from the Grand Wazir to the merchant in the short story every position holder is a man, this causes gender hierarchy and status difference. Samira changes her appearance only to gain freedom from the gender stereotypes and to prove that a woman, if given a chance and permission, can accomplish great things.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the present research, it is suggested to look at this story from a comparative lens, studying the prevalent gender stereotypes and social roles in other contemporary works by western female authors. This will offer a fascinating insight into how gender dynamic works in the literature of both eastern and western worlds, how female protagonists from different cultural backgrounds are either agentised or communalized, how this agentization or communalization either hinders or contributes to female empowerment or marginalization.

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