

From History to Herstory: From Feminist Criticism to Feminist Stylistics

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Abstract

This research scrutinizes the overall journey from feminist criticism to feminist stylistics. It, in a way, explores the evolution and intersection of feminist criticism and feminist stylistics in literary studies. The de facto phallogocentric society leads to the discourse of questioning the mode of writing and its stereotypical use by society. This use ultimately developed a need for critics to argue the generalized view and focus on *écriture féminine*, the idea of promoting a feminist mode of writing. In a phallogocentric society, it becomes obligatory to understand the relation between language and power along with its effects. The work is an attempt to depict the gradual development of feminist criticism, and its various subdisciplines culminating in the development of feminist linguistics and feminist stylistics that started considering language as a social practice and a medium to avail representation in society. It is now accepted that language is gendered and thus needs to be modified. The covers the evolution from feminist criticism to feminist stylistics. Hence, tracing the journey from 'history' to 'herstory'.

Keywords: feminist criticism; feminist linguistics, feminist stylistics; phallogocentric; *écriture féminine*; phallogocentric; neutral/separate language

Introduction

Patriarchy, in the chronicles of human history, has always remained a dominant force moulding the structure of society, societal norms, identities of people, culture, roles, etc... It has a ubiquitous influence, affecting the societal structures from private families to public sectors. It has pushed women to inferior roles by generalizing them and privileging men with authority, control, and power. With patriarchy, becoming the de facto social structure and having entrenched control on society, a feminist movement emerged to have a lasting impact, to challenge the status quo, have gender equality, a place for representation, and the rights of women.

Language, power structure, and representation have always been at the core of feminist discourse analysis. Various branches namely feminist criticism, feminist linguistics, and feminist stylistics, offer unique insights into the patriarchal structure of society and its portrayal in culture, language, and literature. This research paper attempts to examine the convergence of patriarchy, feminism, feminist criticism, feminist linguistics, & feminist stylistics, explicating their implications for society to understand the dynamics of gender present in society.

Feminist criticism deconstructs the phallocentrism embedded within society in the form of grand narratives and literary texts. Feminist critics divulge the structure carrying subversion and oppression, by challenging and questioning the gendered representation, stereotypical gendered roles, sexuality, and power structure. Critics have started anatomizing the canonical works and the works that marginalize women, from the ground-breaking work of Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* to the contemporary feminist literary theories, like that expounds the gendered complexities and the perspectives of the phallogenic authors writing from the centre.

Feminist linguistics probes the power of language as the source of epistemic violence. The language that shapes and reflects society, has always been perpetuating patriarchy through symbols, discourse, and linguistic conventions. Linguistic determination, linguistic engineering, discourse analysis, semiotics, etc... have influenced feminist linguists to critique the gendered language and portray discrimination done through language and its usage. A need has been felt for a gender-neutral language by challenging the discursive practices and the comparisons that refrain from the representation of women in society.

Feminist Stylistics provides a meticulous study of literary language and aesthetics of the text by adding on to what feminist linguistics and feminist criticism provide. Looking at the narrative style, linguistic strategies, formal textual characteristics, etc. employed by the authors, feminist stylisticians reveal how gender identities, gender differences, gender roles, power relations, etc... are encoded in the texts. By decoding the gendered meanings encoded in the texts in the form of words, phrases/sentences, and discourse, the Feminist Stylistics theory employed by Sara Mills in 1995, invites readers to critically analyse the text and questions the politics of representation done through texts. This assists in having a close analysis of the text and looking at the agency of language.

Going ahead on this interdisciplinary journey of patriarchy, feminism, feminist criticism, feminist linguistics, and feminist stylistics one is bound to have questions about agency, identity, hegemony, societal gendered roles, & social change. How do patriarchal ideologies shape one's understanding of sex, gender, and language? How do feminist interventions bring change in literary interpretations and transformation in culture? By looking at these questions critically we can aspire to deconstruct the gendered structure of the society and envision a neutral language society with gender equality, justice, representation, etc...

1. What is Patriarchy?

Patriarchy, a social institution, serves as the foundation for debates on gender inequality, discrimination, and roles. "Patriarchy is the single most life-threatening

social disease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation.” (Hooks) Bell Hooks one of the famous American authors asks men to consider patriarchy as a ‘pathology’ rather than a ‘privilege.’ She believes that patriarchy entails the production of certain coded behaviour that flows into children through ‘parenting’ which is a spurious rational act. Not considering it as irrational helped the society to forward the so-called grand narrative. Men being ignorant of patriarchy, have themselves become a prey of it. This promoted the stereotypical social norm of generalising gender roles.

“Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence.” (Hooks) Patriarchy gets promoted both by woman and man making them perpetrators and sufferers of patriarchy. In the social structure, religion becomes a medium to instil patriarchy making it pre-discursive. “At church they had learned that God created man to rule the world and everything in it and that it was the work of women to help men perform these tasks, to obey, and to always assume a subordinate role in relation to a powerful man. They were taught that God was male.” (Hooks) Reinforcing these teachings, people were made to consider this the “natural” way to live a life. Simone de Beauvoir talks about how the society believes male as the “natural sex” and objectifies females considering them as “Other.” This order of hegemony creates as Bell Hooks puts – “psychological terrorism”, where the biologically determined body of a child is confined to accept certain behaviour according to her/his sex. For instance, a girl child is asked not to express anger and a boy child is forced to become violent in order to forward the scripted lineage of patriarchy.

Patriarchy rules through sartorial, embodied, and most importantly linguistic levels. It is promoted overtly and covertly through the phallogocentric society and also through mothers. “After this beating I was banished – forced to stay alone in the dark. Mama came into the bedroom to soothe the pain, telling me in her soft southern voice, “I tried to warn you. You need to accept that you are just a little girl and girls can’t do what boys do.” In service to patriarchy her task was to reinforce that Dad had done the right thing by, putting me in my place, by restoring the natural social order” (Hooks). This conditioning is a part of the entire process of schooling children into the structure of patriarchy. Children are being traumatised to mould them into patriarchy. This traumatization done at the psychological level is considered normal. Feelings being suppressed makes patriarchy a pandemic where society suffers this epidemic. Instruments of patriarchy are domination and power. And family is the first place where the indoctrination of patriarchy takes place. According to Bell Hooks, a family without man lacks patriarchal values. Whereas, on the other hand, a family headed by a woman, romanticizes male dominance by promoting it. This shows that a patriarchal household controlled by a woman has much more patriarchal dominance rather than the house run by a man. This is the result of ignorance.

Finding bliss in ignorance doesn’t always fall true. Hooks suggests that patriarchy can get dismantled only by acknowledging it. Both men and women will have to do so. Not putting patriarchy into words, one is confining oneself to the phallogocentric structure. This becomes evident when man himself is unaware about this term. It has been so deeply imbibed into the minds that one feels uncomfortable even in

discussing it. Patriarchy has affected one's speech; speech of women and men; psyche of women and men. This gave wind to gender inequality, inequality in speech, gender discrimination etc...

Religion has always become a tool to impose patriarchy. It is the preconceived notion that in the name of religion, one can dominate and objectify others. As it is believed that women too are the perpetrators of patriarchy, the point lies that they are conditioned to be the perpetrators. Simon De Beauvoir rightly says, "No subject posits itself spontaneously and at one as the inessential from the outset; it is not the Other who, defining itself as Other, defines the One; the Other is posited as the Other by the One positing itself as One. But in order for the Other not to turn into the One, the Other has to submit to this foreign point of view. Where does this submission in woman come from?" (Beauvoir) This submission is continuously by the means of words, actions, etc... enrooted into the psyche of women since birth where religion plays an important role. The society's moralists have always felt delighted in depicting the weaknesses of women. "Lawmakers, priests, philosophers, writers, and scholars have gone to great lengths to prove that women's subordinate condition was willed in heaven and profitable on earth" (Beauvoir). Language being the medium of inflicting power over others, has always been under the influence of such institutes.

2. Why Feminist Writing?

Historically, women have become prey to objectification in phallogocentric societies. Jacques Derrida introduced the word 'phallogocentric', derived from the combination of phallogocentric and logocentric. Phallogocentric refers to the male point of view, whereas logocentric depends on language to provide meaning. Phallogocentric means putting masculinity at the centre of all meanings. Language with this becomes dominant in patriarchal societies. It is the medium of all speech, resulting in a reciprocal interaction between language and power dynamics, becoming the most powerful technique to control people. India had long been its victim. This method of displaying authority is rooted in those at the centre. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak refers to this as 'epistemic violence' (Spivak).

Spearheads were the earliest feminist writers who questioned the stereotypical gender conventions of society and fought for women's rights. It was a time when women had negligible options to get work published and gain higher education. Deliberately and indirectly, they have always been ignored by literary canons. Hildegard of Bingen was a 12th-century German Benedictine abbess, writer, and mystic. She created her language 'lingua ignota' and composed great poetic texts. Through her writings on various subjects - theology, medicine, and botany, she tried to showcase how capable women were in terms of leadership and creativity by focusing on the intellectual and spiritual life of medieval women. Some of her earliest works are *Scivias* and *The Book of Divine Works*. Christine de Pizan, one of the pioneers of feminist writing, was an Italian French Writer. Despite her era's societal constraints, she fortified women's potential and stricken them to achieve social equality, visible in her works such as *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* and *The Book of the City of Ladies*. Margery Kempe was one of the earliest autobiographical writers of English Literature. Through her famous work, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, she focuses on the social experiences and spirituality of medieval women who defied traditional gender roles and, by

challenging conventional institutions, adopted certain religious practices. These marginalised feminist writers have set a tone for later generations by writing for the equality and rights of women.

During the 17th century, Anna Maria van Schurman was one of the earliest women who had attended university and had written on women's education extensively. Her work *The Learned Maid* (1659) is one of the notable ones. Imaginative and bold works of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, for instance, *The Blazing World* (1666) questioned the restrictions placed on women's educational rights. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz through her works such as *Foolish Men who Accuse*, had argued for women's access to knowledge. With this, by the end of this century, writers such as Mary Astell started proposing the idea of a female college through some of her works – *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694) and *Some Reflections upon Marriage* (1700).

Patriarchy exercised control over societal representation. Women were ignorant or were made ignorant, of such representation by denying them the right to an education, preventing them from taking use of their opportunities. 18th-century women writers, being the voice of society, had to battle for women against the phallogocentric framework. Sarah Fielding and Charlotte Lennox through their works *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744) and *The Female Quixote* (1752) respectively, challenged the stereotypical notions of perceiving women. *The Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen* (1791) of Olympe de Gouges demands equal rights for women. Judith Murray used to publish essays promoting equal rights for education through one of her notable essays "On the equality of the Sexes" (1790), and Frances Burney mentioned the struggles of women in her work namely *Evelina* (1778). Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), written at the peak of the French Revolution, is one of the first works of feminist literature through which she created a common theme for all feminist writers to delve. She contends that education makes it necessary for a woman to be a man's partner to preserve the advancement of morality and wisdom. The right to education for women was put into action through a woman's writing, which she refers to as a 'revolution'. Mary intended to demonstrate how the male-dominated culture creates a submissive position to demonstrate authority, and not because of women's vulnerability. She believed that women might reverse this notion by enabling themselves to comprehend, analyse, and interpret things.

A vibrant period for feminist writers was the 19th century when writers used to advocate for the rights of women through their writings. A leading figure in the women's suffrage movement was Elizabeth Cady Stanton who co-authored the seminal "Declaration of Sentiments" in 1848 which asked for equal rights for women. One of the famous writers writing under the male pseudonym George Eliot was Mary Ann Evans. In her works, she focused on the complex social and psychological themes that included the roles and aspirations of the women belonging to the Victorian era. Her noteworthy works are *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and *Daniel Deronda* (1876). A collaborator of Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, was the co-founder of the National Woman Suffrage Association, who had relentlessly advocated for women's suffrage, property rights and equal pay. A writer who challenged traditional gender roles was Emily Dickinson, who was famous for her unconventional style of writing that includes themes of death, nature and immortality. Writers started penning

down strong female characters that certainly critiqued society's so-called definition of an ideal woman. Louisa May Alcott was one such writer and is best known for her work *Little Women* (1868-69).

With time women began to receive education, and women authors began to write under their true identities. The problem occurred when their writing was deemed substandard. Their compositions were labelled as emotional outbursts. Writing was viewed as a problematic behaviour for women. The male-dominated culture implicitly prohibited people from expressing their feelings to create a secure zone and avoid being exposed for their actions. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellowpaper*, published in 1892, is about a narrator who is forbidden from writing, considering nervous breakdown as a result of her writing. She is separated from her newborn kid as she is urged to 'rest-cure.' Man is seen to be the rational being, and woman is the irrational. Men are de facto granted the authority of women. And Gilman questions this authority. Finally, the narrator confronts her husband's attitude and, via imagination and writing, frees herself from patriarchal constraints.

Women gradually gained access to education and began writing and expressing themselves. The only way to gain representation is to establish one's place in society. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, published in 1929, explains how, despite their education, writing, and expression, women were denied a place in society. Through this work, Virginia Woolf demonstrates how women are not permitted to enter the library or rather don't have access to any room which they can name as theirs. Society having no real or figurative space for women, makes it difficult for women to live in and become representative. One can still find this struggle of women to become representative and to be heard, prevailing in society.

Along with this, feminist theory came up where writers started opposing the subjugation of women that refrained them from having representation in the patriarchal society. Women had started writing but the entire notion of marginalizing them did sustain. Writers and theorists of 20th century namely Simone De Beauvoir, Adrienne Rich, Luce Irigaray, Audre Lorde, Kate Millett, Sandra Gilbert, Hélène Cixous, Margaret Atwood, Julia Kristeva, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Angela Davis, Susan Gubar, Barbara Smith, Bell Hooks, Judith Butler, etc. came up with new concepts by deconstructing the century-long societal structure.

Feminist writing becomes necessary as it holds a mirror reflecting truth and a ray of change that requires women 'to write' and 'to speak.' Feminist writers through their works have been instigating women to change 'Can the subaltern speak?' or 'Is the subaltern allowed to speak?' to 'A Women will Speak.' Words such as 'marginalized', 'subalterns' etc... are used to space-ify women. Women through their writings have the power to foster the margins. Hélène Cixous in her work *Laugh of the Medusa* talks about how women should write for women. She starts her essay by saying, "I shall speak about women's writing: about what it will do. Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies – for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her own movement" (Cixous). The same fatal goal with

which women have been suppressed is the goal of taking patriarchy ahead, the meaning of which not even the entire fraternity of men is aware.

A lot has been written about women by men. But, what will the centre know about its equivalent, if they deliberately put them to the margins? Simon De Beauvoir quotes Pouline de la Barre, one of the seventeenth-century feminists who says, "Everything that men have written about women should be viewed with suspicion because they are both judge and party" (Beauvoir). Cixous thus asks not to determine the future based on the past and says, "I do not deny that the effects of the past are still with us. But I refuse to strengthen them by repeating them, to confer upon them an irremovability the equivalent of destiny, to confuse the biological and the cultural. Anticipation is imperative" (Cixous). She is against the idea of how society has reserved writing just for males and all that women write has been kept secret. Cixous focuses on breaking something that refrains us from writing. She says, "Write your self. Your body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth. Our naphtha will spread, throughout the world, without dollars – black or gold – nonassessed values that will change the rules of the old game" (Cixous). She asks women to write with 'white ink', the metaphor of breast milk.

According to her women are made to feel ashamed of their bodies by men. Feminine sex as she says has always been unrepresentable to men like that of death. She also mentions how there are few men who are not afraid of femininity and with this asks women to write and be representable for themselves and other women. And thus, she says, "Let's hurry: the continent is not impenetrably dark" (Cixous), by coming up with the notion of 'écriture féminine.'

3. Herstory of Feminist Literary Criticism

Refrained to have proper space in the society to represent through writing, women writers never got proper recognition. Women writers were considered as minor writers. Whatever they wrote was never acknowledged. They have never been the part of literary canon like male writers. Feminist literary criticism deals with looking at the text through a new lens. As women writers were never acknowledged, no history is available about them. Feminist criticism looked at the development of the female writing tradition. This focused on what women writers write and all that they wrote. In order to have 'herstory' of women writers, their works had to be analysed.

Struggles of women in society to avail representation have always been there. Very little or rather nothing had ever been known about women who wrote. For ages women have been writing may it be into religion, life and society, experiences, perceptions, etc. Fiction works written by women had never been acknowledged since they were believed to write just to purge their emotions. For religion, society's preconceived notion of GOD being he/man/father made it impossible for women to be a part of literary canons. Julian of Norwich, a woman who lived more than six hundred years ago, had written a lot about spirituality which had gone unnoticed. Very little is known about her life too. "She lived in late fourteenth-century England. At the age of thirty, she fell seriously ill. As she lay dying in the presence of her mother and the priest who had given her the last rites, she had a lengthy vision of Christ's suffering on the cross and his redeeming love. She recovered and became an anchoress, walled into a small apartment, with one window into a church and one

window onto the world. This extreme enclosure, so foreign to modern sensibility, did not prevent her from having an active ministry. She is known to have provided spiritual advice to many over several decades and was still living in 1416" (Boris). Julian was the one to write about the Motherhood of GOD, being the first and most probably the only spiritual writer to use feminine language for GOD.

In 1960s Feminist literary criticism, gave importance to women's representation in the society and their authorship. In 1980s it was taken ahead by looking at works of women writers and also on the queer theory. Judith Butler is famous for her great contribution in philosophy, feminism, and activism worldwide. In her famous work *Gender Trouble* (1990), she talks about gender as an improvised performance. It is based on gender studies that looks into the society not as male or female but as someone who holds power in the society. In her work, Judith Butler warns against certain things that is the for pre-patriarchal past. For this she looks at the genealogy of women. She argued that patriarchy is an inevitable and natural state of affairs. She talks about two things. Firstly, says that 'the category of woman' is created by a group of people where there are narrations excluding women from it and the same dominate them. It then becomes difficult to define this 'category of women.' Secondly, she believes that these narrations that exclude women are biased where they always take into consideration the self-interest of the society. And with this Butler tries to understand the nature of the subject which dominates the society and are always represented.

Butler when she tries to talk about the nature of the subject, she mentions that under political representation, subject means anything that is defined or has defined identity by automatically getting its status. She further tries to solve the problem as why it becomes difficult to define the 'category of woman.' Women are not defined because a woman doesn't hold any power to be defined. In society, where patriarchy defines the subject, one can be a subject only if one has power and is defined. In such society where women have been considered as object, can never be a subject. Butler with her essay tries to build the status of subject for women because she believes that woman is only the subject of Feminism. She mentions that gender roles and patriarchy play a major role in ensuring man's domination over woman. Power structure and gender roles differ from place to place and culture to culture. The main reason behind the domination of women in the society and having lack of power and status is the socially constructed gender roles which deny the representation of women.

In 1970s a term 'Gynocriticism' was coined by an American feminist critic Elaine Showalter. It refers to the practices of criticism on female writings by female writers. Such writings are devoid of male dominant literary tradition. This excludes whatever belongs to the phallogocentric literary traditions. In other words, gynocriticism indicates and focuses mainly on women's own writings. Feminist Stylistics that emerged in the late 20th century was an offshoot of Gynocriticism.

The model Gynocriticism was much discussed in her essay 'Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness' (1981). The originating factor for this concept, however was her another essay 'Towards a Feminist Poetics', in which Showalter reflects on the history of women's literature. She reasons that this history can be divided into three phases. First is the 'Feminine' phase – 1840 to 1880. According to Showalter, in this phase, women

wrote to prove of having equal standards of intellectual skills like that of males. They either suffered inferiority complex or had other challenges in getting the work published. Writers like The Bronte Sisters, Mary Ann Evans, Amantine Aurore Lucile Dupin, Alice Bradley Sheldon, Elizabeth Gaskell, etc. used male pseudonyms just to address such challenges. Second is the Feminist phase – 1880 to 1920. It was the phase where women protested with their writings against values and standards. The phase focused on women's rights and values as well demand for autonomy. Writers like Sarah Grand, George Egerton, Mona Caird, Elizabeth Robins, and Olive Schreiner are major contributors. Third, the Female phase started in 1920 and still continues. It is about self-discovery on the part of female writing. According to Showalter women have avoided two forms of dependency that is imitation and protest. Instead, they have started focusing on to write about their experiences which have become the source of their autonomous writing. This extends the feminist analysis of the culture to different techniques and forms of literature by the works of writers like Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield, and Virginia Woolf who have constructed female aesthetics during this phase.

During 1970 when criticism on women's writings has been greatly approached from various perspectives such as cultural, historical and textual one, a greater need of having a critical framework which is free from traditional and male dominant criticism was felt. Showalter at this juncture wished all female writers and critics to adopt Gynocriticism as a model of criticism. Showalter, found the traditional critical practices of theorizing and revaluating the presentations of female flawed in the canon since the base of such critical frameworks, according to her is inherently and substantially a male dominated tradition of criticism. Therefore, in her essay 'Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness', Showalter says, "A cultural theory acknowledges that there are important differences between women as writers: class, race, nationality, and history are literary determinants as significant as gender. Nonetheless, women's culture forms a collective experience within the cultural whole, an experience that binds women writers to each other over time and space" (Showalter, Feminist Criticism in Wilderness).

Showalter categorises two distinct modes of Feminist criticism i.e. Feminist as Reader/feminist critic, and Feminist as Writer/Gynocritics. 'Feminist as Reader', generally shows females as consumers of male generated literature. And the literature which are produced by male has a stereotypical presentation of women as well as there are misconceptions about women. Here our main concern is the second one—Feminist as Gynocritics, where females are presented as the producer of textual meaning. Such textual meaning encompasses history, styles, genre and structure of writing by women. It focuses on psychodynamics of female creativity. Gynocritics not only redefines the nature of the theoretical problems, but also it offers many theoretical opportunities to see women's writing as their primary subject as opposed to androcentric one. Thus, this essay is closer to Gynocritics and it contributes much into learning about the relationship of women with the literary culture and tradition.

It is equally important to understand how Showalter supports theory of Gynocriticism through four different models – Women's writing and Women's Body or Biological Criticism, Women's Writing and Women's Language or Linguistic Criticism,

Women's Writing and Women's Psyche or Psychoanalytic Criticism, and Women's Writing and Women's Culture or Culture Criticism.

As per the first model which is Biological Criticism, it is very important for female writers and critics to understand as how the female body is presented in the work in relation to society so that they can identify and discriminate it from the traditional point of view. It is also important to understand that the body functions of female have great cultural correlation and therefore to redefine them is very crucial in writing. It mainly focuses on the importance of female body as source of imagery. And lastly, it advocates that the personal experiences pertaining to female body are very crucial for deriving something of women's own.

As per Linguistic Criticism, Showalter urges for having own language as women have not been allowed to have full linguistic range through which they can express themselves and have been kept in silence. She proves that the language spoken by male and female are different and is presented through biological differences or social and cultural identification. The writer like Elaine Showalter has rightly said, "All that we have ought to be expressed—mind and body—rather than wishing to restrict women's linguistic range, we must fight to open and extend it." (Showalter, *Feminist Criticism in Wilderness*)

Psychoanalytic model of criticism has its base in Freudian psychoanalytic theory. According to that, female is depicted as 'Lack' which creates negative image of female or female's writings. Furthermore, it is difficult for women writers to trace historical, ethnic and generic forces which have created these differences. However, several feminist critics like Gilbert, Gubar, and Miller propose to gleefully adopt this notion of 'Lack' as peculiarity of women's writings.

The last and the most significant one is Cultural Criticism. This model incorporates the idea of women's body, language and psyche and interprets them in relation to socio-cultural contexts. Cultural theory separates women as writers and women as gender as per the biological, language and psychological aspects. The cultural experiences of women writers can take place and generate a possibility of a collective experiences of all females across the globe, and can represent as a separate culture—not subculture—but a culture within a general culture of men and women. It can coexist within a heterogeneous culture without being affected by the culture of male counterpart. Therefore, Showalter advises that female critics must use the concept in relation to "what women actually write, not in relation to a theoretical, political, metaphoric or visionary deal of what women ought to write" (Showalter, *Feminist Criticism in Wilderness*).

The theory propounded by Showalter here has great cultural correlation, and is quite useful for women writers and gynocritics for redefining female-self in relation to socio-cultural context in their writings. However, it has its drawbacks too like it cannot be inclusive for the experiences of heterogenous women writers, like black female writers, lesbian, and so on. It excludes several other stratification and differences, created within women's writings based on their political, religious, ethnic and racial experiences. In spite of having this lacking, this model performs a great role in redefining and enforcing women's own cultural choices.

Several writers came up questioning the texts written by men as well as the language used by them. As while contended women having no place to express, critics like Cixous, who motivates women to speak and write for themselves and for other women. Along with this, feminist critics started looking at the language used to represent women in texts written by male writers. Theories like Deconstruction and Reader Response have been used to analyse the phallogocentric texts.

4. Feminist Linguistics and Feminist Stylistics

Feminist critics started analysing the texts and focused on reconstructing them. There have been gendered roles encoded in the texts which have always been visible. Robin Lakoff one of the famous linguistics, in one of her texts *Language and Woman's Place* talks about how language carries attitude and referential meanings in the text. She writes, "The marginality and powerlessness of women are reflected in both the ways women are expected to speak and the ways in which women are spoken of" (Lakoff). Power and Gender are inseparable. The language used for women has become discursive which works against women. Whatever a woman writes, is looked at as demeaning and not worthy enough.

A critic named Joanna Russ, in her text, *How to Suppress Women's Writing*, talks about how society considers the writing of a woman. The cover page of her book reflects the society saying, "She didn't write it. But if it's clear she did the deed... She wrote it, but she shouldn't have. (It's political, sexual, masculine, and feminist). She wrote it, but look what she wrote about. (The bedroom, the kitchen, her family. Other women!) She wrote it, but she wrote only one of it. ("Jane Eyre. Poor dear, that's all she ever...") She wrote it, but she isn't really an artist, and it isn't really art. (It's a thriller, a romance, a children's book. It's sci-fi!) She wrote it, but she had help. (Robert Browning. Branwell Bronte. Her own "masculine side.") She wrote it, but she's an anomaly. (Woolf. With Leonard's help...) She wrote it BUT..." (Russ). The chapters of the text namely, Prohibitions, Bad Faith, Denial of Agency, Pollution of Agency, The Double Standards of Content, False Categorizing, Isolation, Anomalousness, Lack of Models, Responses, and Aesthetics, are divided upon how women's writing have been analysed by the male-dominant society.

Edward Saper one of the famous linguists, introduced the term 'linguistic determination.' This idea focuses on how language and its structures have the power to limit and rule one's perception, thought processes, etc... While analysing the phallogocentric language structure of the society, one can question the lacunas present in the text. This leads the feminist critic to look at the sexual stereotyping present in the language of the text. To get unbiased language for society, 'linguistic engineering' helps feminists to take a powerful stand.

Feminist Linguistics started looking at the language minutely. Nouns, adjectives, verbs, sentence structure, etc... have been looked at through the lens of feminist stylistics. Dale Spender in her work *Man Made Language* (1980) writes about male dominance over the language through which women have been silenced. She examines the forms of language that regulate the existence of women. *Language, Gender, and Sexuality* written by Scott F. Kiesling offers an overview of how language is used by speakers to clearly showcase sexuality and gender.

In order to analyse the text, and to look at the encoded gendered issues present in the text, Sara Mills, a renowned French linguist came up with her work *Feminist Stylistics* (1995). The work certainly looks at why the writer has used certain words and what the person is about to convey. It also focuses on the entire behaviour of readership, the way readers read the text leading them towards the gendered issues encoded in it. The aim of this text revolves around the investigation of the ways in which gendered linguistic features are employed and also how the readers find the gendered meaning present in the text. Mills provides the reader with a kind of stylebook, the way in which one can read the text to decode the gendered issues; i.e. analysing the text at the level of words, level of phrase/sentence, and the level of discourse.

Through her concept of Feminist Stylistics, Sara Mills has significantly contributed a lot to feminist criticism. Mills with *Feminist Stylistics* offers valuable guidelines for developing fresh perspectives in the field of literature. Her framework has been utilized by many scholars to delve into the texts to portray differences in the writings of men and women, to mark their choice of words and their implications. Remarkable instances are – Feminist Stylistics analysis done by Amna Noor Hussain and Tahira Jabeen of *Broken Verses* written by Kamila Shamsie, and Fatma Batular's research that incorporates Feminist Stylistics Analysis of *The Laugh of the Medusa* written by Hélène Cixous. With this, scholars have started elucidating the complex relationship between language, gender, and sexuality of the patriarchal society.

Conclusion:

Finally, the analysis of patriarchy, feminism, feminist criticism, feminist linguistics, and feminist stylistics unveils the hegemonic identity of the patriarchal society that consists of encoded gendered and stereotypical representations of women by not providing them space in society and objectifying them. This research paper looks at the structure of patriarchy by questioning how it forms the agencies of society, how it makes sex and gender discursive by stereotyping gender roles and identities, and the way it shapes or modifies discourses through the lens of feminist scholarship.

It has become inevitable to reveal the phallogocentric structure embedded in the literary texts and question the stereotypical/patriarchal grand narratives by also giving space to every voice that had been marginalised. Feminist criticism makes it possible. By deconstructing the gendered language of society, feminist linguistics focuses on gender-neutral language and questions the entire structure of patriarchal hegemony. With this, feminist stylistics enhances one's understanding of the textual elegance and confer upon gendered meaning encoded in the text by analysing the gendered identity of an individual and patriarchal hegemony engraved within the literary grand narratives.

When one ponders upon the contributions made by feminist scholarship, one gets to know about the struggles for equality and justice in the society that follows the phallogocentric structure. The intersections of feminism, linguistics, discourse analysis, and stylistics, along with patriarchy provide a safe ground to look for a fair space for representation. Feminist scholarship acts as a ray of hope through which women can be free from 'epistemic violence' and society can have diarchy as its structure instead

of patriarchy. This research leaves a scope where scholars can work on the discourse where 'herstory' has already started but its just the beginning.

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