

Performed Femininity: A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Hedayat's "The Doll Behind the Curtain" and Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain"

Amirghaffari, Asma¹ 

Samaneh Boudaghzadeh² 

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Abstract:

In literature and sociocultural domain, female desire remains a contested ideological battlefield. This article analyzes the comparative feminist discourse on the reconfiguring of female subjectivity through patriarchy and the repressive silencing of discourse in Sadegh Hedayat's "The Doll behind the Curtain" and "Cat in the Rain" by Ernest Hemingway. This article draws on Judith Butler's gender performativity, Michelle Lazar's feminist critical discourse analysis, and Sandra Bartky's theory of discipline power to analyze the complexity of silencing and objectification. The discourse reveals that Hedayat's account illustrates literal silencing through overt and covert forms of objectification. In contrast, Hemingway's account depicts the silence and erasure of feminine identity via emotional repression and discursive silencing. This study sheds light on an area of cross-cultural feminist literary criticism. The study reveals the forms of female repression in the East and West and how control of desire exposes the dominant discursive order. The findings suggest that literature can assert and reconstruct patriarchal power in the politics of desire, which remains silenced.

Keywords: gender performativity; feminist critical discourse analysis; disciplinary power; objectification; silencing; female desire.

¹ MA student, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Persian Language and Foreign Languages, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran. (Asma.Amirghaffari1404@ms.tabrizu.ac.ir)

² BA graduate, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran. (boudaghzadehsamane@gmail.com)

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1. Introduction

Literature does not simply act as an expression of sociocultural reality, but also as a key tool in the construction, redefinition, and legitimization of the hegemonic patriarchal system—or, in other words, gender discourses (Lazar 5). Narrative, language, and character in texts allow texts to naturalize oppressive systems and structures, repress female Desire, and redetermine gender roles in accordance with hegemonic patriarchal systems (Butler 191; Bartky 74).

Both narratives stem from significant socio-historical contexts where the necessity to change gender roles emerged. Hedayat's 20th-century Iranian narrative depicts a modern-traditionalist society where women's autonomy is heavily restricted. On the other hand, Hemingway portrays an effectively distant and lonely world after World War I, where women's desires remain unclear to us due to social decency.

In the majority of literary works, women are either silenced or completely erased, with their own needs relegated to the background due to the hegemonic symbolic patriarchal order (Bartky 74). This is due to processes like objectification, silencing, and internalization of pre-specified gender roles, which operate within the discursive and narrative structure (Lazar 145).

The purpose of this essay is to explore how patriarchal discourse not only stifles feminine desire but also changes its direction and meaning. This will be done through a comparative reading of Sadegh Hedayat's "The Doll behind the Curtain" and Ernest Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain" — two short stories from very different contexts. However, despite the different historical and cultural contexts of these two stories, in both cases the feminine protagonists have their Desire either entirely effaced or acknowledged only within the limits of the prevailing patriarchal order (Butler 191). Qualitative, descriptive, and interpretive methods are embraced in the current research to question how patriarchal power structures create and reproduce literary gender identities.

Despite their different cultural and historical backgrounds —early twentieth-century Iran and post-World War I —the chosen texts became part of this study since each narrative deals with the issue of female autonomy. This analytic construct is based on the theory of gender performativity formulated by Judith Butler, feminist critical discourse analysis by Jacob Lazar, and the concept of disciplinary power by Susan Bartky.

Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the following central research questions:

- 1) How is female Desire repressed and redefined in two selected cross-cultural narratives through the discursive mechanisms such as silencing, objectification, fixed gender roles, and disciplinary control of female behaviors?
- 2) How do the discursive mechanisms function differently through the distinct narrative styles of Sadegh Hedayat and Ernest Hemingway?
- 3) How can the narrative marginalization of female characters in the two narratives create possibilities for challenging and subverting the dominant patriarchal system?

2. Literature Review

Placing these two works side by side, each rooted in different sociocultural backgrounds, provides an excellent opportunity to examine how patriarchy interacts with female Desire through discourse analysis and feminist critique. Although there is already a substantial body of scholarship on both Hedayat and Hemingway, it seems that previous studies have focused on feminist critical theories. However, each of them addresses only part of an issue and moves away from comparative and cross-textual perspectives. For instance, in Michelle Lazar's essays "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis" and "Politicizing Gender in Discourse" (2005), the theoretical framework of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) is examined. However, her focus is predominantly on social and media discourses, rather than literary works and comparative analyses across cultures. Furthermore, none of the previous studies combine and juxtapose the Judith Butler's theory of "Gender Performativity" and Sandra Lee Bartky's theory of "Disciplinary Power" with FCDA to reveal the profound layer of interaction between femininity and patriarchal dominance.

From another perspective, studies such as *The Communication Concepts Represented in Puppet Behind the Guidance by Sadegh Hedayat* (Saghei et al.) and *Foucauldian Feminism: A Reading of Sadegh Hedayat's "The Doll Behind the Curtain"* (Mozafar et al.) analyze the communicative concepts only within a single literary work, without deeper investigation in terms of gender oppositional analysis and feminist criticism.

Meanwhile, the articles "Gender Issues in the Transmission of the Artistic Image of Women in the Works of M. Auezov and E. Hemingway" (Aktanova et al.) and "Hedayat and Hemingway: A Study in Comparative Stylistics" (Nakjavani, which inspired the selection of these two works, also lack a feminist critical perspective and discourse analysis and focus more on stylistics or the general representation of women.

Accordingly, this research attempts to investigate the complex and unconventional connections between "Femininity" and patriarchal power structures in both Eastern and Western cultural contexts employing the theories of several most eminent theorists, Judith Butler, Michelle Lazar and Sandra Lee Bartky. In fact, this research bridges the gap in the discourse and literature research by integrating the theoretical frameworks of Gender Performativity, Disciplinary Power, and Feminist Critical Discourse analysis by relying on a discourse and cultural comparisons of two literary works of Sadegh Hedayat and Ernest Hemingway. As this research manifests how patriarchal discourse silences and reproduces female desire and in two different cultural contexts with distinct discursive mechanisms.

Moreover, the argument presented in this article relies on the theory of disciplinary power by Sandra Lee Bartky, which is a development of the ideas put forward by Michel Foucault on the regulation of the body (Foucault 195). Bartky believes that femininity is not an innate but relatively constructed. It is reproduced through hidden cultural practices that shape women's behavior, sense of beauty, and desires. Her docile body theory shows how women internalize

such cultural expectations and then rebuild their self-images so that they can fit into the patriarchal standards. This critical paradigm effectively explains how power is reinstated in mundane activities and appearances in literary works.

FCDA examines key mechanisms such as silencing, discursive positioning, naturalization of dominance, and objectification, which together reveal how patriarchal discourse constrains and diminishes women's agency. To start with, the comparison analysis of the two works in diverse sociocultural backgrounds presents a deeper insight into gender discourse in the Eastern and Western literary cultures. This comparison not only defines similarities but also highlights the main differences between the two settings, as well as the repression of female Desire.

The theme of repression appears immediately in Hedayat's narrative, which is described in subtle terms because the female character is psychologically presented as an absolute doll, silent, voiceless, and mentally. On the other hand, Hemingway portrays the image of repression in a less direct and psychological sense, that is, the US wife is denied her emotional needs, and her goals evaporate in the air by abandonment and denial. Such diverse processes depict how patriarchal discourse is modified to suit various milieus.

Second, it shows how discourse analysis provokes repressed and suppressed female Desire in narratives. In addition, the very narrative structure serves to replicate or pervert gendered power. Both stories develop silencing patterns by using focalization, ellipsis, and dialogic framing: Hedayat with the help of a silent feminine character and Hemingway with the help of a prolonged emotional withdrawal and the exclusion through indirectness. These textual maneuvers are significant as they manifest underlying ideological suppositions about gender and agency.

3. Discussion

3.1. Feminine Objectification and the Erasure of Female Desire

Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity posits that identity is neither innate nor naturalized; instead, it is constructed in repeated social performances (Butler). It is through these repetitions that male and female identities are produced and come to be perceived as instituted, i.e., 'man' or 'woman'. In contrast, these identities are inherently fluid and unstable. Butler further explains that "gender should not be conceived as a stable identity, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, fixed in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler 191).

In patriarchal cultures, gender performativity, which is the center of Judith Butler's analysis, takes a toll on women and forces them to downplay not only their desires but also aspects of their womanhood. As such, women in patriarchal cultures are created to be passive objects, but not active subjects, to be gratified by the norms of society. This objectification of women,

therefore, is not only a way to suppress feminine Desire but also to eliminate the feminine identity in social and cultural life, thus showing the assumption that feminine identity could be entirely constructed in the interests of the patriarchy. Nowadays, gender is understood in more complex terms. The most pressing problem in this regard is the objectification of women. It is an issue of utmost significance since women are increasingly subjected to roles that are imposed and reduced to mere objects of restraint and control. It is conjectured chiefly that objectification of women is a disabling process of their intellectual, aesthetic, and creative abilities. It also supports beauty culture that informs women about the value of being feminine according to patriarchal standards established to support patriarchal ideals.

Objectification primarily operates through the concept of beauty. Humanity is endowed with a sense of beauty. Beauty is typically connected with physical aspects. Beauty is dynamic and not fixed, and every human being has a different understanding of it. It is therefore reductionist and restrictive to give one definition of beauty. Every society expects women to abide by rigid and narrow definitions. The pressure often results in women embracing personas that are crafted for the enjoyment and spectacle of others. This is why so many women strive to achieve an idealized and hyper-beautified form that is often dictated by society, failing to acknowledge their own subjectivity. In all of these examples, women continue to self-redefine their existence, all to fit the prescribed beauty standards set by patriarchal society. These concepts become even richer in meaning when explored in the context of literature. Building on the theoretical framework outlined above, the next part of this discussion examines how such gendered dynamics play out in the textual representation of women characters in Hedayat's "The Doll behind the Curtain" and Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain", and how these texts explain objectification and suppression of feminine identity in both novels.

Sadegh Hedayat's "The Doll behind the Curtain" is a compelling staging of how patriarchal systems reduce women to voiceless, objectified figures. In this narrative, the Woman is not symbolically but literally a doll. The reader is shut off from contact with her as a real character the minute she appears. Instead, she is entirely constructed by her body as a male fantasy object, with no voice of her own. Hedayat continued the symbolism of the feminine body throughout the story:

"His gaze fell on the statue of a woman with blonde hair, who held her head at an angle and smiled. The long eyelashes, the large eyes, and the white neck, a hand on her hip, her dress in the blue light of the spotlight made the statue seem strangely attractive to him" (Hedayat 47)

Mehrdad is heavily influenced by patriarchal ideology, and the contrast is used to emphasize the way even education cannot protect one from gender expectations. He does not view the doll as a friend, though, but rather as an idealized representation. This carelessly sexualized depiction is proof of a larger cultural bias to objectify women and reduce their

worth to physical surface. Judith Butler stated that "gender is not something that one is; it is something that one does" (Butler 25). Indeed, the repetition of specific performativity patterns has turned womanhood into a performed objecthood, as the acts that define a woman's gender are those society has long compelled women to perform. This is what Mehrdad thinks of regarding the ideal femininity: "This was not just a statue, but a woman—no, more than a woman, an angel smiling at him" (Hedayat 49).

Society sets an ideal image of femininity that is angelic, submissive, and agreeable. It is then expected that women will be 'acceptable' and 'desirable' to society. Women, then, willingly and harmfully distort their sense of self to be congruent with the patriarchal social aesthetic. The situation, thus, becomes self-objectification. Womanhood, then, is equated with beauty, silence, and submission.

This idealized and universalized vision of femininity becomes even more pronounced when Mehrdad compares the doll to a real woman, his fiancée, Derakhshandeh:

"What surprised him even more was that the statue's overall appearance was not dissimilar to certain facial expressions of Derakhshandeh, except that Derakhshandeh's eyes were hazel while the statues were blonde. However, Derakhshandeh was always melancholic and sad, while the smile of this statue evoked joy and a thousand emotions in Mehrdad" (Hedayat 51).

This binary identifies another dangerous feminine trope: women ought to smile, be cheerful, and be emotionally available. Even the act of haggling over the doll and then buying it becomes a performance of women's subordination to be observed and possessed. It constitutes further objectification coded within the patriarchal gaze.

While Hedayat's vision of women's objectification is so straightforward and physical, Hemingway's in "Cat in the Rain" is internalized objectification. Hemingway describes a woman gently confined within a socially scripted and idealized image. The American Woman in Italy is trying to construct herself based on the performative requirements of society. She is not objectified at this point by physical features, but she is reduced to the level of an object of male expectation by her repeated wishes. Her failure to express precisely what she desires, along with her repeated imprecise wishes, expresses a wavering that Judith Butler describes as "a crisis produced through the failure to fully inhibit the norms of gender" (Butler 179). Instead, she imitates desires and behaviors that are typically related to being feminine.

In contrast to Mehrdad, her husband George is indifferent, which further magnifies her isolation. His indifference is not an intentional practice of objectifying his wife; it does not allow his wife to claim any identity. George plays a significant role in diminishing his wife to being a silent ornament in the home. His apathy eradicates her emotional and physical desires and imposes her self-objectification with no agency. The fact that he withdrew emotionally indicates that her wishes are childish. "Oh, shut up and get something to read". (Hemingway 14)

She is expected to remain silent and serve as a decoration in the home. As a result, the Woman is caught in a loop of self-objectification, determined not by direct force but by the pressure within her.

"I want to pull my hair back, to smooth it and tie it at the back, so that it feels tight," she said. "I want a cat to sit upon my lap, and purr when I stroke it."

"And I want to eat at a table with my own silver, and I want candles. Moreover, I want it to be spring, and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror, and I want a kitty, and I want some new clothes" (Hemingway 15-16).

These longings are a craving for a performance-based identity organized from within herself, rather than a notion of perfect femininity imposed by an external normative aesthetic and behavioral code, which does not prove satisfactory for her. Objectification is more likely to be seen in its less overt forms, which are harshly enforced upon women as part of cultural conversation. Mehrdad's emotional callousness meets George's transgressive sexualizing of the doll. While Mehrdad idealizes his Woman and superimposes her onto the doll, George's inability to emotionally connect prevents his wife from attaining any self.

3.2. Silencing and Invisibility: Presence through Absence

FCDA dynamically integrates feminist theory and discourse analysis to study texts and contexts, examining how language naturalizes and/or undermines gendered relations of power. According to Lazar, silencing is a repetitive strategy that marginalizes women's voices in social relationships and writing. Thus, the identity and agency of women are lost, degraded, or demeaned by these strategies. Silencing can also be in many forms, where women talk but their voices are undermined, cut off in male discourse. Silencing is not just a result of forgetting or unintentional omission; it is a demonstration of gendered power relations that constitute part of oppression, thus normalizing male domination and female submission. Feminist critical discourse analysis attempts to make these inclinations visible and opposes them. Lazar asserts: "FCDA is committed to revealing the often invisible and taken-for-granted ways in which gendered power and dominance are discursively produced and sustained" (Lazar 147).

Silence in literature is usually as meaningful as the words. Both "The Doll Behind the Curtain" by Hedayat and *Cat in the Rain* by Hemingway, even though separated by considerable distances, exhibit silence and passive femininity. Analyzing the narratives with the insights provided by the FCDA of Lazar reveals how women are excluded: the silence of their voices, the erasure of their influence, and the loss of their subjectivity in the patriarchal world.

Hedayat's realistic stories portray different facets of the lives of everyday urban citizens. Unlike novels and short stories written in the critical realist tradition, these two stories exhibit imaginative elements. However, they vividly depict the realities of the context, allowing readers to imagine the people and real-life situations easily. The lives, loves, dispositions, characters, and morals of both men and women are presented in ways that invite reflection

on complex questions, providing readers with considerable interpretive freedom. Women, in particular, are represented dually in Hedayat's psychological tales: on one hand, as an unattainable angel, and on the other, as a rebellious figure. In the Doll behind the Curtain, there is the idealized figure of a woman.

Lazar observes that through repetition, normalization, and symbolic marginalization, discourse perpetuates gender ideologies. This is evident in Hedayat's story, where the doll is neither expected to be intelligent nor to express any opinions or thoughts. Mehrdad chooses her precisely for her passive indifference. As an object, she satisfies his emotional and sexual appetite solely through her external form. Butler suggests that this kind of femininity is not a natural trait. It is a performance, one that is enacted in response to the male gaze and reiterated through social norms.

"She never spoke, never expressed an opinion... she was always silent, always in a beautiful state that represented the highest of his thoughts and desires" (Hedayat 55)

It is important to note that the female character has no name and does not speak throughout the story. This symbolic erasure supports even further the societal rules that women are expected to be silent, passive, and ornamental. Consistent with the views of Lazar, Mehrdad's obsession with the doll exemplifies a classic case of discursive practice that portrays female passivity as desirable, thereby stifling any sense of independence:

"Mehrdad desperately tried to get away, yet a memory came back to him. Against his will, he put his hand into his trouser pocket and drew out the revolver and fired three shots in quick succession at the statue. A minute later, there was a groan of the statue falling on the ground" (Hedayat 157).

Here, at this climactic point, Hedayat symbolically discloses how male-produced fantasy is most vulnerable to challenge by the potentiality of female agency. When an agency shadow appears on the face of the doll, Mehrdad's fantasy is shattered and ruined, indicating the performativity and fragility of gender roles. As Butler explains, the instant of off-norm gender performance threatens the norms imposed on them. Based on her theory, the text shows how the construction of female subjectivity reverses the imposed image of society and reveals the anxieties inherent in the patriarchal order. Subsequently, based on FCDA, the text shows how silencing women is not exercised through open oppression but rather through institutionalized discursive strategies that perpetuate male hegemony and voicelessness in women.

Hemingway's works have received a considerable number of feminist criticisms, especially for the representation of women as either harshly oppressive or entirely subservient. Similar to Hedayat, Hemingway's female characters are of two categories. The first is beautiful but cruel, controlling, and dominating. The second Hemingway female is the Woman who is merely passive and immensely submissive to men (Umlauf 25-26). In *Cat in the Rain*, the female character belongs to the latter type; her desires are repeatedly ignored, and her identity is framed entirely through the male gaze.

The construction of discursive silencing portrays women as present but without any agency. The Woman in the story is trying to state her Desire for love, represented by the Cat, but is not only ignored but is 'silenced' at a structural level. As shown in the analyses of her various speech acts, she articulates her desires but is undermined by her husband. The insensitivity and apathy of her husband weigh down on her. This apathy, too, is a case of literary structural silencing. The Woman exists in the subject form, but without any real power to effect discourse. She embodies her passivity within the gendered structural order.

"Oh, shut up and get something to read," George said. He was reading again.

"Anyway, I want a cat," she said, "I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I cannot have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat" (Hemingway 15).

"George was not listening. He was reading his book. His wife looked out of the window where the light had come on in the square."

In the end, the Woman disappointed returns to the room. However, lastly, the servant comes to the room with a cat. This may seem like a happy ending, but it is actually quite complex due to the FCDA.

According to Lazar, ownership is attributed to the Woman, but not because of her actions, rather because of a small male child. This means that the Woman is not the one acting. This raises the question of whether the Woman's need is fulfilled not by her own actions, but by a male. This is what Lazar calls structural silencing. It is not that she is absent; instead, her case aligns with the absence of a male patriarchal framework. It does indicate that the Woman is still bound to masculine structures, even with a cat.

As a result, both the stories overlap in their portrayal of silence: Hedayat silenced the characters through representational symbolisation, whereas Hemingway succeeded in creating structural invisibility through the dismissal of emotions. In both instances, the subjectivity of women is not depicted as independent, but as driven by male Desire, power, or apathy.

The analysis draws from Butler's performativity and Lazar's FCDA to unravel the systematic invisibilization of women's desires, rather than merely their repression, across and through cultural narratives. The feminine subject remains ensnared within a cultural matrix of gendered discourses, even when incorporated as a silent statue or an unspoken wife. They inscribe and prioritize a male voice and visibility over hers. Far from being odd exceptions, these figural accounts are consistent with and help sustain larger ideological constructs that shape and maintain gender relations in the real world to this day.

3.2.1. Repressed Female Desire and gender performativity:

Judith Butler argues that gender is not an entity but exists as a precarious identity that must be defined over time, established through the stylized repetition of actions (Butler 519). The social and historical construction of quotidian practices prevails in this conceptualization,

where the practices are not based on biological determinants. They are done in a way that merely represses the self's Desire to write about powerful cultural norms. Femininity, as represented in both *The Cat in the Rain* and *The Doll behind the Curtain*, is not an inborn state of female behavior. Instead, it is something created within society through habitual performance to indicate cultural norms and is not the outcome of Desire. This agrees with Butler's stance that gender exists as real as it is practiced and that it is only through repetition that this presentation of reality is maintained (Butler 520).

Both cultures replicate gender as a historical and cultural script that women are made to act out, which leaves them unable to meet their inherent desires. The Desire is subordinated because gender performance requires following a preexisting script. Most importantly, feminine libido is controlled systematically by being consciously perpetuated by affective abandonment, strict social roles, and cultural inhibition of female Desire. In the Western cultural context, represented by the works of Hemingway, femininity is expressed through indirect repression and lovemaking despondency. In contrast, in the Eastern example of Hedayat, femininity is expressed through direct spying and social strictness.

In her essay "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," Judith Butler posits that the phenomenon of gender 'identity' as something 'natural' and 'given' is a result of a set of constructed and repetitive performative acts: acts that are repeated enough for them to be believed as 'real' and 'natural' to the rest of the social world. Because gender 'identity' is a social construction, the acts that disrupt the expected 'norms' of any assigned gender, particularly by women, are capable of exposing the fragile illusion behind the 'naturalness' of the social order. A woman whose self-expression goes against her prescribed role, for example, is not only contesting the order of patriarchy, but undermining the premise that gender is a 'given' and 'fixed' social 'fact' in the first place. Because of such radical potential, the socially assigned 'desiring' Woman is most often met with terror and brutal violence. The female character who yearns becomes a threat not because of her yearning, but because her yearning exposes the rigidity and artificiality of gender roles in reality. This is a condition well depicted in Ernest Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain" and Sadegh Hedayat's "Doll behind the Curtain". In the Western narrative of Hemingway's writing, the American wife breaks the image of a submissive spouse by revealing her limited Desire for affection from her husband. We observe this when she insists, "I want a cat... If I cannot have a cat, I want my long hair back." These soft and feminine desires speak of a greater emotional need that breaks the patriarchal system. While she makes a modest and subdued request, she rebels against the patriarchal culture of the period.

In comparison, in the Eastern setting of the Hedayat story, the Woman is obliterated, made silent and invisible; this absence reeks of longing and a self that, to a certain extent, opposes that male-defined construction. When the man suspects that the Woman might have an autonomous identity outside the constructed gender maps, he reacts violently. The female

voice in both narratives can be described as something that threatens patriarchal structures, not due to its inherent threat but because it can raise the validity of established gender roles.

According to Sandra Lee Bartky's theory, women's bodies are controlled by a patriarchal structure that pre-constructs specific female roles and behavior to define women. These roles—often called "scripts" are constructed in ways that restrict the women's desires and autonomy. These 'scripts', as Bartky argues, are sets of culturally constructed models that discipline women's actions and desires within patriarchal society. These preexisting scripts influence women's lives not only through formal systems but also through constant and subtle practices that lead women to monitor and adjust their desires to social norms. As Bartky argues in his essay "The disciplinary techniques through which the 'docile bodies' of women are constructed aim at a regulation that is perpetual and exhaustive—a regulation of body's size and contours, its appetite, posture, gestures and general comportment in space, and the appearance of each of its visible parts" (Bartky 74). A woman is to stand, walk, look, and even talk about what she wants in a predetermined manner. These predetermined norms are given to such a point of naturality that the women themselves accept them. In Sadegh Hedayat's "The Doll Behind the Curtain," the unnamed Woman is completely at the mercy of the male gaze, is not seen as a self with her own consciousness, but as a lifeless, controlled, and ornamental being. This gaze, which is a witness to the hegemonic patriarchal discourses, demotes the lives of women to the "object of desire". Here, an existing script of a woman limits her to an ornament, a silent, reluctant life.

Conversely, in Ernest Hemingway's short story, the American wife in a hotel room represents a woman trying to establish meaning and her inner will within an already constructed female framework. She says, "I want to pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I can feel" (Hemingway 16).

"I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her.

I want to eat at a table with my own silver and candles.

Moreover, I want it to be spring, and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror, and I want a kitty, and I want some new clothes."

Moreover, she encounters such responses:

"Oh, shut up and get something to read."

However, in the script, such longings are considered as a "small and frivolous need." Her husband's reaction reflects this. The American wife is confined to pre-ascribed roles, and her inner longings are not considered. It must be noted that these controlling structures and patterns are not limited to one class or culture; in fact, they occur in every culture for a similar reason and delineate the female Desire in every patriarchal culture. Comparing Eastern and Western fictions, it is evident that suppression mechanisms vary, but the suppressive structure remains consistent. Thus, the "Preexisting feminine framework" is the primary force of oppression of women's Desire, not merely in both stories, but in the lives of most women as

well. It is built and sustained by disciplining the female Desire, and internalizing the male power.

In "Foucault, Femininity, and Modernization of Patriarchal Power" and employing Foucault's theories, Sandra Lee Bartky argues that in the present, exercising patriarchal power is not purely coercive, but rather is insidiously internalized through seemingly "natural" and "normal" behavior. Bartky claims that women are evaluated not only by their actions but also by the things they are socially positioned to want to desire. Bartky refers to this internalized control as the "naturalization of power" in the sense that all forms of male dominance over female Desire are seemingly natural and taken for granted. Bartky argues that "The disciplinary power that creates femininity is omnipresent and it is nowhere to be found; it is the voice of no one that disciplines women, causing them to believe that the image they would like to be is one that they would like to be" (Bartky 74). Bartky describes how, in contemporary patriarchal systems, women are faced with an imposed ideal form of femininity that they ostensibly regard as their own. Female Desire is constructed and controlled, and as a result, any deviation from the prescribed ideal is deemed 'unacceptable' or 'abnormal.' This idea appears in both Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain" and Hedayat's "The Doll behind the Curtain." In Hemingway's story, for example, the American wife yearns for a cat, an unarticulated wish that signifies a more profound desire for emotional closeness and connection that her husband mocks and dismisses.

"I am going down and get that kitty," the American wife said.

"I will do it," her husband offered from the bed.

"You do not have to," she said.

"Do not get wet," he said.

Here, the husband does not just dismiss the wife's Desire. He tries to put her down in a casual, authoritative way, as if her Desire is unrealistic and even inappropriate for a woman who should be satisfied, calm, indifferent, and indifferent to frivolous things. However, she does continue to voice her repressed desires. "I would like to have my hair pulled back tight and smooth out, and have a big fat knot at the back, which I can feel. I want a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I pat her." In this case, the American wife is fantasizing and also deluding and altering herself, her sounds, and her appearance to include a cat. However, those desires remained blatantly unsatisfied due to the expectation of more subdued and traditional feminine behavior. This is Bartky's Theory at its core: the invisibility of female Desire when it does not conform to traditional feminine behavior. Sadegh Hedayat's "The Doll behind the Curtain" illustrates the same. The girl that Mehrdad longs for is not someone specific, but only a figment of a man's fantasy woman. Mehrdad repeatedly mentions her with 'soft' and 'submissive' words. However, the moment the girl unexpectedly opens her mouth and shows signs of being independent, Mehrdad becomes angry. "Could this be true? Could it be possible?" (Hedayat). This illustrates emotions of fear and anxiety about something someone

ought to lack, like a woman who cannot be muted and dares to maintain her autonomy and longings. Mehrdad has a concept of femininity that is predicated on no voice and no self. When a woman stepped outside her naturalized and assigned position, Mehrdad's emotional equilibrium was shattered. In each of the stories, the plausibility of gender roles, as per Bartky, is symbolically and literally demolished. The women are compelled to wear socially constructed and externally assigned roles rather than their authentic selves, making them feel as if they are instituted to deny their personhood and embrace the societal vision as if it were a spontaneous truth.

In Sandra Lee Bartky's article "Foucault, Femininity, and Modernization of Patriarchal Power," one of the key claims is the inter-relationship between 'male gaze' and 'power' frameworks, which are produced discursively. Drawing from Foucault's theory, Bartky posits that power in modern times is no longer exercised through violence but is performed through ordinary rituals of social life, and common ideologies to subtly discipline and shape feminine Desire. In this model, women internalized the experience of being under a disciplining male gaze — a gaze that persists even in the absence of men, compelling women toward self-monitoring and self-regulation. Equally, Bartky contends in her essay "There is a sense in which the disciplinary power that inscribes femininity on the female body is everywhere and nowhere; the disciplinarian is everywhere and no one in particular (Bartky 75)." That is, male disciplinary power to create ideal femininity in a constructed feminine structure is everywhere without having a fixed source. The male gaze is, so to speak, ubiquitous, compelling women to regulate themselves through its protocols. Under this regime, discursive power means that the man does not act as an agent but as the representative of an overruling ideology, which invests him with the right to decide reality, to demarcate Desire as legitimate or illegitimate, and to control female Desire. Patriarchal domination in Sadegh Hedayat's "The Doll behind the Curtain" is evident not only in the social system but also in perceptual and communicative mechanisms. In the story, the Woman appears before the young man's eyes as the classical Eastern type of gender role, characterized by silence and passivity. This Woman is nothing but an ornament or an object. It should be pointed out that this Woman's legitimacy exists only to the extent that she is cooperating with the presupposed gender roles. No sooner does the Woman speak than the man's discursive dominance is disrupted, and he responds aggressively. "Could this be true? Could it be possible?" (Hemingway)

This quote shows that man's authority collapses after the Woman goes against the expected silence and submission and ends up forcing him to restore supremacy through violence.

Once again, in Ernest Hemingway's "The Cat in the Rain," the masculine power is dominant; however, it is asserted through modern means rather than direct control. The American wife appears to be in a purportedly liberated form; however, in reality, her femininity is overlooked. "Oh, shut up and get something to read," George said. He was reading again. (Hemingway)

The quote suggests that the man disobeys the Woman's Desire and prescribes her passive activities. The man himself keeps quiet and subtly excludes her from conversation. Male characters in both stories do not appear as individuals but as representatives of universal hierarchical patriarchal discourse. Sandra Lee Bartky's concepts of "male discursive authority" and "disciplinary power" are superbly depicted by male characters. A woman who dares to express her need is dismissed outright. Therefore, the male gaze is a discursive practice, constantly looking at women and reconstituting the social gender roles through them.

In Sandra Lee Bartky's article "Foucault, Femininity, and Modernization of Patriarchal Power," cultural fiction of femininity is described as an imposed schema that disciplines women's bodily existence, behavior, and inner desires to conform to the socially expected image of femininity. Such an imposed schema is not an attempt to signify the reality of what women are, but rather an effort to instruct them on how they must be in order to be socially and culturally accepted. According to Foucault, Bartky believes that gender roles are internalized in the psychological world of women who maintain passive support roles without being consciously triggered by society. These gender roles do seem natural and self-evident, yet they are outcomes of political and cultural institutions. The fiction of the ideal body of femininity disciplines women's bodies and constructs their subjectivity (Bartky 80). That is, femininity is not biophysical, but is built by sociocultural standards prescribing how women ought to live. Both narratives demonstrate how and why women's behavior is governed by socially restrictive patriarchal and gender norms, whereby women are expected to live by the injunctions of "decent," "silent," and "compliant." In Hemingway's "The Cat in the Rain," the American wife's Desire for the Cat (if only phantasmatically, she is said to) is ironically a projection of the Woman's will to a more complex and socially disallowed desire for love, attention, and even belonging, all of which are aimed to be cultivated and earned through her compliance to the expected gender role. The conversation between the American wife and her husband signals the wife's Desire, and the social and gender norms antagonistically imposed on her.

"Oh, shut up and get something to read," George said. He was reading again. (Hemingway).

George's indifference to her wife's Desire not only negates her Desire but also re-establishes him as an active and rational cultural figure. As Bartky suggests, this gesture reflects "symbolic order" in which women must be present yet unseen and silently heard.

In Sadegh Hedayat's "The Doll Behind the Curtain," the girl is confined to the status of a doll. She is selected not for who she is, but for her physical beauty, which is in line with the man's inner Desire. In this Eastern story, the Woman is silent and voiceless. She is envisaged, reformed, and finally effaced by the male protagonist once she steps out of his imagination by simply speaking.

"She was always silent, always in a beautiful state that represented the highest of his thoughts and desires. She needed neither food nor clothing, made no excuses, never fell ill,

and had no expenses. She was always content, always smiling, but more importantly, she never spoke, never expressed an opinion, and there was no fear of their characters clashing." (Hedayat).

As Bartky argues, the only possible way of surviving under the patriarchal system is by silencing and regulating her female Desire. It is worth noting that in both narratives, whenever a woman dares to do anything outside the established gender roles, she is either muted or killed by a patriarchal society.

As Bartky argues, such narratives painfully yet precisely reflect the restrictions imposed on women by strict gender roles – roles that are internalized from early childhood, and at times reinforced by women themselves. "Femininity is not simply imposed in the female body from the outside; it is internalized and reproduced." (Bartky 73)

This cross-cultural comparative study of the two narratives demonstrates that the internalized patriarchal gaze can operate in distinct ways: at times through violent opposition, as observed in Hedayat's narrative, and at other times in the form of a mild indifference, as manifested in Hemingway's narrative. Accordingly, Bartky's hypothesis can be employed as a critical framework to analyze femininity not as an expression of selfhood, but rather as a product of disciplinary mechanisms.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that female Desire in the Eastern and Western cultures is not only suppressed but also internalized, reproduced, and redefined by the systems of patriarchal discourse (Bartky 74; Butler 191; Lazar 145). Drawing on theories of Judith Butler (191), Michelle Lazar (145), Sandra Lee Bartky (74), and the feminist critical discourse analysis, this study shows that gender identity is neither natural nor inherent but rather a product of sociocultural construction through the repetition of the established gender roles (Butler 191). In both narratives, the female characters either disappear or become silent and passive due to their gender roles, which are predetermined through the blunt and harsh wording of Sadegh Hedayat or the indirect and implicit narration style of Ernest Hemingway.

This study found that in both stories, female Desire acts as a disruptive force against the prevailing patriarchal order. Butler states a woman expressing a desire is a target because that desire is viewed as a potential threat, but because it can unveil the performativity nature of the gender order'. In both stories, the mere hint of a woman's Desire is sufficient for the patriarchal structures to respond defensively. The violence in one of Sadegh Hedayat's narratives and the emotional detachment in a story by Ernest Hemingway express the patriarchal response to women's Desire.

Ultimately, this study shows that literature can be a means to reveal and contest hegemonic patriarchal discourse. Through a feminist lens, one can observe how female characters in literature have their identities constructed and contained within the shadow of a male gaze, a

symbolic erasure that limits and silences Desire (Bartky 74). However, one could argue that this marginalization from the 'center' can serve as a point of departure for contesting patriarchal power. In this sense, literature shifts the focus of feminist inquiry to the construction of the 'lost' female and the suppressed female Desire as a means of positive transformation. This is indicative of a collective movement toward the assertion of a fundamental right to be silenced (Lazar 145).

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