

# Representations Of Masculinity In Naqvi's Attar Of Roses: A Textual Analysis

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## Abstract

With the emergence of Men and Masculinity Studies as a discipline, significant scholarly attention has been paid to the analysis of literary works from this perspective. However, Pakistani Anglophone short fiction has remained underexplored, particularly with reference to construction of masculinity. In order to address this issue, this study examines the representations of masculinity in Attar of Roses (1997), a short story collection by prominent Pakistani Anglophone writer, Tahira Naqvi. Using Connell's concept of Hegemonic Masculinity (1987, 1995) as the theoretical framework, the researchers have carried out textual analysis of two purposively selected stories namely, Love in an Election Year and History Lessons to get insights about the representations of masculinity in the selected works. It is found that masculinity is not something uniform and static, but an evolving, dynamic phenomenon informed and influenced by cultural, social, and historical factors which is sufficiently evidenced in these stories as such factors appear to shape and impact the gender identities of different characters.

**Key words:** Hegemonic Masculinity, Masculinities, Tahira Naqvi, Attar of Roses

## 1. Introduction and Background

Feminist discourses draw a clear line of distinction between 'sex' and 'gender' and take exception to the assumption that biological sex determines one's gender identity (Tyson 92). Gender thus is socially constructed (Klages, 91; Upstone, 164; Vance, 24), and it finds its manifestation in the roles, behaviours, norms and values a society or culture upholds at a given time (Blackstone, 335-338). Various factors lead to the social construction of (gender) identity which, as a social reality, takes shape in three stages, that is, externalization or the production of cultural products, objectivism wherein the products take on an objective reality, and internalization, when

members of the cultural group through socialization come to treat as "objective facts" the cultural products given by the society (Vance, 24-32). Upstone refers to it as the idea of socialization, according to which, an individual's gender identity develops by means of his/her exposure to "a set of rules and acceptable behaviours" society subscribes to (164). Kimmel argues that the notion of masculinity and femininity is constructed with reference to each other: "What it means to be a man is to be unlike a woman" (9319). This illustrates that gender is informed by the definition of the 'other'; masculinity is therefore socially constructed around its anti-femininity outlook and is

determined by factors such as class, race, ethnicity, age, and sexuality (9319).

Masculinity scholars Michael S. Kimmel and R. W. Connell maintain the modern masculinity studies has its roots in psychology, anthropology, and sociology (Kimmel et al. 5). They posit developments in these fields provided frameworks early on to analyze masculinity through perspectives such as emotional attachments, cultural differences, social structures and norms. By the mid-twentieth century, masculinity came to be seen as a role or identity internalized under the influence of a particular culture's norms or values and acquired "from agents of socialization such as family, school, and mass media" (5). Gottzen traces the origin of masculinity studies to certain pro-feminist white scholars in the US, the UK and Australia in the 1980s (1). This led to the continued development of the discipline with new topics, dimensions, and perspectives regularly coming to the fore throughout the last decade of the previous century (1). Gottzen, however, notes scholars like Beasley underpinned the modernist perspectives such as social constructionist and socialist-feminist frameworks that served to inform masculinity studies (2). It however goes to the credit of pioneering work by the likes of Connell and Kimmel in 1987 which led to the emergence of 'proper' masculinity studies. Their key contribution was the introduction of 'multiple masculinities' perspective (2).

Subsequently, and to date, new frameworks on masculinities continue to emerge. Borkowska opines *Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities* is informed by three main theoretical paradigms or frameworks, viz. *Masculinity in Relation to Second Wave Feminism*, Anderson's *Idea of Inclusivity of Masculine Behaviours* (2009), and Connell's *Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity* (1987, 1995). R. W. Connell's notion of *Hegemonic Masculinity*, which this study uses as main

theoretical framework, refers to masculinities as plural. The concept is thus considered groundbreaking as it dispels the idea of masculinity as a monolithic static. Connell adopts Gramsci's concept of hegemony (without use of coercion) (Kurtz 6642) and translates the same into "the configuration of gender practice" which legitimizes patriarchy as a system to secure domination of men and the subordination of women (Connell 77). The concept, however, goes a step further by taking into account the construction of the dominant male gender not in relation to women only but also with reference to non-hegemonic masculinities. Messerschmidt argues Connell understood hegemonic masculinity as a specific form of masculinity in a given historical and society-wide social setting that legitimates unequal gender relations between men and women, between masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities (86). To him the construction of hegemonic type is essentially relational in nature. It involves the presence of non-hegemonic versions of masculinities including 'complicit masculinities', the indirect beneficiaries of hegemonic masculinity; 'subordinate masculinities', the meeker, effeminate versions; 'marginalized masculinities', the ones relegated to the margin owing to their class, race, ethnicity and age; and 'protest masculinities', those that react to economic and political disempowerment (86, 87). Hegemonic masculinity also leans on the exhibition of emphasized femininity (Connell 183) for acquisition of meaning. The concept allows an understanding as to how the presence of plural masculinities generates hierarchical domination not only between men and women, but also between men themselves. As Morettini explains men regardless of their social class, race, ethnicity or outlook position themselves in relation to the hegemonic masculinity (27). In the process, they absorb and internalize its codes and principles, and thus end up reproducing it. Another important aspect is the pressure which

non-hegemonic masculinities feel to comply with this ideal. Eventually, the expression of masculinity fashioned after the hegemonic type perpetuates the gender-based hierarchy in a society.

The representation of masculinity in Pakistani Anglophone literature has not been sufficiently explored. In this regard, Pakistani short story written in English deserves greater attention compared to the novel. Underlining this neglect, Shamsie, the foremost critic and historian of the Pakistani English literature, maintains compressed fiction is often touched en passant under the overarching term 'fiction' (135). Shamsie has discussed Pakistani Anglophone short story in terms of early years (1966-1992) and the period that follows (1993-2011). She maintains that short fiction came of age in Pakistan after "a long period of gestation" (473). After a sustained process of consolidation by the likes of Zaib-un-Nisa Hamidullah, Zulfiqar Ghose, Aamer Hussein and Hanif Kureshie, Pakistani Anglophone short story gained prominence through a breed of Pakistani-American writers including Tahira Naqvi, Javaid Qazi, Moazzam Sheikh, and Maniza Naqvi. With Talat Abbasi's *Bitter Gourd and Other Stories* (2001) and Mueenuddin's *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* (2009), Pakistani English short story is considered to have turned a new page.

For the present study, the researcher s have selected two stories from Tahira Naqvi's short story collection, *Attar of Roses* (1997). Naqvi, a Pakistani-American diaspora writer has two collections – *Attar of Roses* (1997) and *Dying in Another Country* (2001) – to her credit. She is widely acclaimed for her extensive translations of Manto, Khadija Mansoor, and feminist writings of Ismat Chughtai (Shamsie 494). The stories featuring in the selected collection are set in middle-class, urban Pakistan, providing insights into the lives of different male and female characters. The collection highlights

various gender- and class-related issues which are of particular relevance when it comes to the analysis of masculinities.

Pakistan Anglophone literature has been a subject of critical and scholarly investigations from various perspectives including feminism. The existing body of feminist-oriented work remains largely focused on the representation of women and female gender in patriarchal settings. Work on masculine identity and construction of masculinity in Pakistani (short) fiction is lacking, and there is adequate scholarly space for such an undertaking. Accordingly, the objective of this research is to study and examine how hegemonic masculinity is represented in Naqvi's collection *Attar of Roses* (1997), and how it interacts with other forms of masculinities, as well as with femininities. The study examines two short stories from the collection, *Love in an Election Year* and *History Lessons*, to answer the research question as to how different versions of masculinity work and interact with one another, and with the feminine gender. Significance of this undertaking lies in its attempt to offer a different perspective on the work of an important Pakistani short story writer. The objective is to pull feminism-related scholarly work out of the rut of one-sided focus on constructs that define, impact and situate women. Studies on representation of masculinity in Pakistani literature are generally lacking. In providing an alternative analytical and critical approach, the research will underpin the need to study Pakistani Anglophone literature from the Masculinity Studies perspective. To the students and scholars of literature, particularly those working on Pakistani literature, especially (short) fiction, this research will be a catalyst to expand upon the existing body of work. The study can also have significant social and societal impact by drawing attention of a predominantly patriarchal society to healthy alternatives, if presented.

Various scholars have carried out the study of masculinities in Pakistani Anglophone literature, highlighting different aspects of its construction. Bjerre has looked at masculinity in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) alongside two other novels. The study notes the failure of masculinity at two levels as the narrator as well as his American listener are unable to live up to the notion of an ideal masculine in a wounded, post-9/11 American society (259, 260). It questions American media's propagation of populist hyper-masculinity as a role model and ends up problematizing the normative notion of an ideal male. Rahman analyses Nadeem Aslam's *The Blind Man's Garden* (2013) through a postcolonial eco-masculinities lens. Rahman maintains the novel highlights the toxic side of a stereotypical, hegemonic masculinity conditioned by war, and goes on to suggest a welcome alternative of "postcolonial eco-masculinities" manifested in the forging of humane relationship with the ecological world and in the displacement of masculine dominance (2). The study situates human masculinity in the multispecies world, and advocates humility and humaneness toward natural world in general (3). Schötz's analysis of British-Pakistani writer Hanif Kureishi's short story oeuvre contends that the stories are instrumental in sensitizing the readers towards "a better understanding of contemporary masculinities", thereby enabling them to imagine "new forms of masculine identity" (217). Schötz points out how the stories could be read for depiction of masculinity in crisis, and for hinting at alternative, non-hegemonic versions. The study is significant in that Schotz brings forth several instances of disruption of (masculine) gender identity and proceeds to highlight the ways Kureishi's characters negotiate with their identity crisis. It also underpins a change in power structures with reference to gender. Another study on Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for the Lost Lovers* (2004) investigates Pakistani-Muslim

masculinities in the South Asian diaspora. Mirza demonstrates how cultural and religious background shape and determine the performance of masculinity which is evidently patriarchal, hegemonic, and even toxic (194). The study also underpins the intersection of race, class and gender as reflected in the marginalization of the male Pakistani immigrants. Almutairi's 2021 study analyses three works, namely, Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) and Ayad Akhtar's *Disgraced* (2012) for the effects of Islamophobia on Pakistani male identity in the post-9/11 US and post-7/7 UK. The research discusses how a terrorist act leads to stereotypical constructs about the identity of a certain nationality or culture. A similar study by Ozlem Atar tracks masculinities in *Saffron Dreams* (2009) by Shaila Abdullah. In her analysis of Abdullah's novel, which is fairly relevant to this review, Atar posits Pakistani men are essentially patriarchal and hegemonic in domestic space, but despite this disposition, they are also hardworking immigrants and affectionate partners and fathers, a role they are obliged to take under their strong family tradition (492). "Saffron Dreams is an attempt at a gendered re-humanization of Muslim men in the aftermath of September 11" (488). The insights it provides in terms of intersection of cultural and religious background and race-related concerns in the wake of 9/11 are important. Shazia Sadaf's 2015 study titled *Daniyal Mueenuddin's Dying Men* delineates how the notion of masculinity in Pakistani society gets shaped by religious, tribal, parochial, and cultural determinants. The research plays up a crumbling sense of masculinity as presented by Mueenuddin (490). Sadaf's overall argument hints at the possible emergence of new masculinities but it stops short of identifying the same. The review has benefited from diverse perspectives on representations of masculinities in Pakistani Anglophone fiction, and will serve to

inform the subsequent discussion with profound insights. The researchers did not come across any study examining representations of masculinity in Naqvi's *Attar of Roses* (1997).

## 2. Methodology

The current study attempts to add to the existing body of work on Pakistani Anglophone literature from the perspective of masculinities. Keeping in view a relative lack of scholarly work in the area, together with Naqvi's place as a culturally rooted writer, the researchers have selected two short stories, *Love in an Election Year* and *History Lessons* from her collection *Attar of Roses* (1997) as sample for study from the Hegemonic Masculinity perspective.

The researchers have used Textual Analysis as a method of analysis. Lockyer maintains textual analysis involves a close examination of "either the content and meaning of texts or their structure and discourse" with an aim to deconstruct the way texts operate or are constructed to produce meanings (865). However, it needs to be stressed that textual analysis is not concerned with 'correct' interpretation of a text. Instead, it seeks to arrive at a preferred meaning of the text by examining its polysemic nature. This has to be done within the ambit of accepted analytical "codes, conventions, and genre of the text and its social, cultural, historical, and ideological context" (865). McKee, however, defines textual analysis as an act of making "educated guesses" (27). In performing the textual analysis from the perspective of Connell's concept of Hegemonic Masculinity (77), the study is guided by McKee's step-by-step method as follows: select the topic of interest and develop research question(s); list the texts relevant to the question(s); find more relevant texts; try to develop a sense of the 'semiosphere' along the reading; interpret the selected text (138,139).

## 3. Analysis and Discussion

*Love in an Election Year* offers interesting comparative and contrastive instances of hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity underpins validation of unequal relationship between men and women, and among masculinities through the use and application of cultural tools and discursive practices (77). Levy holds hegemonic masculinity describes: "(1) a position in the system of gender relations; (2) the system itself; and (3) the current ideology that serves to reproduce masculine domination" (253). All these aspects, that is, the hegemony of a particular brand of masculinity together with the system that exploits different cultural tools and practices to validate a certain ideology are at work here. Given the socio-cultural and historical backdrop of the story, the type of masculinity which enjoys the hegemonic status in *Love in an Election Year* is essentially patriarchal. Williams argues radical feminists see patriarchy as "a familial-social, ideological, political system" that vests unchallengeable powers in the fathers (males) with an aim to oppress, subjugate and subordinate women. To realize this objective the system employs different tools and strategies including force, religion, culture, education and language etc. (110). Greig maintains patriarchal masculinity is about the superiority and authority of masculinity over femininity. It is characterized by ideas and practices that serve to maintain gender inequalities (14). Connell's conception of Hegemonic Masculinity, however, is not limited to the masculine-feminine binary. As Messerschmidt explains, for Connell hegemonic masculinity relates to a specific form of masculinity in a given historical and society-wide social setting that legitimates unequal gender relations between men and women, between masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities (86). In *Love in an Election Year*, the elements of masculine hegemony, and exploitation of cultural norms and practices are introduced at the outset as the frenzied mullahs

are shown in bitter opposition to Ms. Bhutto “because, as they see it, a woman cannot ... hold executive office” (Naqvi 1). The situation transports Shabo, the narrator, to another election year more than two decades back, when Fatima Jinnah (the sister of Pakistan’s founder, Jinnah) contested presidential election against General Ayub Khan. It was in those times the story is chiefly set. Fatima Jinnah lost the election as did Bajji Sughra her love. Bajji Sughra’s brief affair with her cousin Javed, an engineering university student, was abruptly cut short by the highhanded masculine authority of her father and grandfather. Sughra’s parents, her mother included, had decided to marry her off to Salman, a businessman because he had better economic prospects, and because Javed, her student-lover was deemed not an appropriate suitor. This draws to the socialist feminist assertions which link the subordination and oppression of women to the capitalist mode of production and underpin the mutual responsiveness and interdependence of patriarchy and capitalism (Williams 111). The fate of Bajji Sughra’s marriage is directly linked to the economic status of the prospective candidate. In the given circumstances, Javed does not even qualify to be called a candidate because he has no social standing, no job, no economic status. As per Connell’s classification, Javed belongs to the category of marginalized masculinity (80), a group represented by men who are “trivialized and/or discriminated against because of unequal relations external to gender relations, such as class, race, ethnicity, and age” (Messerschmidt 87). Thanks to Javed’s age, and uncertain career prospects as yet, he does not even seem to exist as a prospective match in the eyes of Bajji Sughra’s father. He has no voice whatsoever under the dominant masculinity of the father, whose hegemonic masculinity easily carries the day due to the unconditional support it gets from all sides and stakeholders. The aggregation of Gramsci’s concept of ‘hegemony’ (Bates 351) underpins the salience of consent

rather than force in the enforcement of a certain code. As soon as, the decision is announced, all concerned simply fall in line, thus demonstrating the element of acceptance (consent) which patriarchal authority draws by default. First, to back him is Sughra’s mother, who in her unequivocal support is an instance of what Connell describes as ‘emphasized femininity’ (183). Second is Javed; Shabo, the teenage narrator, being not fully cognizant of the workings of hegemonic (patriarchal) masculinity, wonders why Javed does not tell Sughra’s parents that they love each other. But those who know the dynamics of masculinity within the societal context of the Pakistani middle class, cannot fail to appreciate Javed’s helplessness in this situation. Kimmel argues masculinity is determined by factors such as class, race, ethnicity, age, and sexuality (9319). In this case the class to which all these characters belong, together with Javed’s young age, do seem to impact the society’s perception about him being a marriage-ready male. Hearn opines masculinities vary and change across time (history) and space (culture), within societies and through life courses and biographies (391). Given the fact that the story is set in Pakistan, an Islamic republic, spanning two martial law regimes, one of which was predominantly and characteristically Islamic in orientation, one can expect that the cultural and historical context would have informed the masculinities existing in that time period. In this context, the masculinity of Javed is different from that of Sughra’s father as they both happen to be in different age brackets. This allows the reader to look at masculinity not as a monolithic phenomenon, but as something that assumes a certain identity in response to circumstantial factors and forces. It is therefore not possible for Javed to outrightly defy the decision, and he knows it. When Sughra’s parents decide she is to be married to another person, his reaction does not go beyond verbal outbursts: “She’s false, inconstant, taken in by the

highest bidder, so easily sold” (Naqvi 16). Instead he expects Sughra to have done what he himself did not do: “She could have fought, she could have taken a stand, why didn’t she?” (Naqvi 16). In the end, he only dons up as a woebegone lover. That he did not resist or defy the authority of Sughra’s parents brings out his inherent effeminacy and subordination. At the same times, Javed himself had been conditioned by the patriarchal gender constructs. He too understood that the authority of the father in the given circumstances was unassailable. Morettini sounds relevant when he says men regardless of their social class, race, ethnicity or outlook tend to position themselves in relation to the hegemonic masculinity (27). In process, they absorb and internalize its codes and principles, and thus end up reproducing it. Another important aspect is the pressure which non-hegemonic masculinities feel to comply with this ideal (27). All these assertions find validity in Javed’s person which is evident from his benign response to his rejection. The situation thus underpins the legitimating power of consent both to the extent of men as well as women. The father is seen as exercising his legitimate power, which elicits society-wide acceptance because it is socially and culturally validated. Hegemonic masculinity, according to Carrigan, is the culturally exalted form of masculinity and is largely about “how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance (592). Masculinities operate at internal, interpersonal, institutional and ideological levels (Greig 16) all of which seem to be at work in the story. Javed, for instance, is a beneficiary of similar social constructs which associate masculinity with economic prospects and prosperity. When Sughra breaks the news to Shabo that she is in love with Javed, the Multan cousin, the latter recounts that he was an engineering university student in Lahore and was deemed most promising by the

elders. The promise he holds is obviously economic as the version of masculinity the society celebrates links economic prosperity to masculinity. But still there is time for that promise to materialize as marriage gives the reigns of economic control in the hand of the male. Accordingly, Javed is not even considered by the elders as a candidate.

The relational aspect of masculinity with regard to women is also well played out. Display of emphasized femininity (Connell 183), which is an exaggerated form of femininity, first by Bajji Sughra’s mother and subsequently by Sughra herself sufficiently highlights this aspect. In deciding her daughter’s fate, Sughra’s mother conveniently sides with her husband without deeming it necessary to have her daughter’s consent on this matter. She then is the first instance of the femininity that lends legitimacy to the hegemony of the masculine. Sughra herself goes with the flow once the marriage is consummated. Her progression early on from “Oh Shabo, my life is finished” to “Salman is such a wonderful man” just a few days into marriage is surprisingly quick. It betrays the internalization on her part of gender constructs society has prescribed. Love in an Election Year culminates in complete transformation of Sughra who, by now, has thoroughly accepted and internalized the hegemony of the masculine. She even takes exception to a woman’s right to dream a future of promise and power.

The story does not say much about the masculinity of Salman except that he qualifies to be a ‘man’ because of his socio-economic status. He benefits from the social structures which place the likes of him on a higher pedestal than Javed-type, yet-to-come-of-age men. By the end of the story, the reader gets to know that Salman too has replicated a similar model of masculinity at home, which is manifested in complete obliteration of Sughra’s self.

History Lessons revolves around two school teachers Shahid and Ghulam Ahmed who remain at odds owing to their political views, chiefly moral policing and political persecution of citizens under the martial law regime as instanced in the flogging of children as young as ninth graders. The story yields adequate evidence for the readers to study different versions of masculinities which is in line with Connell's concept of Hegemonic Masculinity (77). On individual level, the hegemonic masculinity is evident in the character of Ghulam Ahmed, the fanatical science teacher, who dominates the conversation every time an argument begins. When a perturbed Shahid initiates a discussion with him on the subject of flogging, particularly of young children, the latter dismisses his criticism, and defends such and even harsher punishments for the sake of moral correctness. "Children must be taught the difference between right and wrong [...] They're going astray," the voice informs him authoritatively" (Naqvi 62). Ghulam Ahmed follows this up with a list of 'ills' he would have the society cleansed of. "... running after western values, wearing tight American jeans, destroying their morals by watching obscene films on the VCR and by listening to that American singer with a woman's face" (Naqvi 62)

The punishments Ghulam Ahmed is talking about are handed down by the military government. This affinity between his views and the practices of a military regime notoriously famous for Islamising the country at that point of time in history, lends a peculiarly Islamic tinge to Ahmed's masculinity. The hegemony of this version of masculinity within the story pushes Shahid on the back foot. Shahid thus exhibits marginalized masculinity (Connell 77) which is a subdued version of manliness owing to class, ethnicity, race etc. (Messerschmidt 87). The moral and religious card Ghulam Ahmed employs is bequeathed from on high and is an instance of exploitation of cultural narratives to

foster compliance and consent. As Carrigan explains, hegemonic masculinity refers to a "culturally exalted form of masculinity" (592). This is simultaneously in line with, and divergent to Gramsci's concept of hegemony which underscores the manipulation of cultural and discursive practices to make ideas acceptable (Bates 351.). While the cultural (in this case 'religious) validation of masculinity is achieved without coercion, any deviance or divergence is reigned in through use of force. This is evident in the ongoing episodes of flogging to quell defiant voices into subordination and silence. Ghulam Ali appears to have absorbed the veracity and validity of official and religious narratives, which give him confidence to behave in a rather aggressive and assertive manner, putting Shahid on the defensive.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is premised on the existence of a dominant form of masculinity, which serves as an example for others to follow. Accordingly, all men try to fashion themselves after that example, internalizing its codes and behaviours and thus contributing to its reproduction and perpetuation (Messerschmidt 86). A clear demonstration of this is traceable in the story. Sitting in teachers' lounge and browsing the day's newspaper, Shahid sees an overwhelming number of the President's pictures splashed all over the paper with his "large, bloated face, with its deep-set eyes and the sculpted Sandhurst-style mustache (*Italics mine*) ..." (Naqvi 61). The mention of Sandhurst-style mustache is a reference to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, England which after World War I trained officers for commission in the British and Indian armies (Britannica). Given the fact that mustache is generally seen as a symbol of manliness, the president's being styled after Sandhurst officers lends postcolonial connotations to the expression of his masculinity, where the model of gender identity is drawn from the colonial masters which everyone else has to look up to (Stanovsky 493).



At the same time, it creates a sense of the colonizer and the colonized (other), thus assigning a lesser status to the masculinity of the rest and serving as a model to fashion their masculinity after. Stanovsky maintains the First World's representations of "native" men's masculinity and sexuality serve to validate the former's gender norms (3), which the 'other' aspire too. The highhanded nature of this masculinity, as exhibited in Ghulam Ali's proclivity for violent punishments is informed by Pakistan's own colonial past. As Peletz argues that Pakistan's violent struggle for independence in 1947 fuels gendered discourses which highlight "the violent nature of Pakistani (and other) men" (537). No wonder, as Shahid heads to the Jail Ground to witness public flogging, he watches that "from the bowels of the truck" "emerge men, young, old [...] lean-cheeked, and sport(ing) hefty mustaches" (Naqvi 67). It is then that he notices how common a practice it has become to wear that kind of mustache which is tantamount to the validation of colonizer-style hegemonic masculinity. "First a national dress, now a national face," he remarks" (Naqvi 68). In contrast, his own mustache, to be shorn because of uneven trimming, clearly testifies to his non-hegemonic masculinity.

The story also shows examples of Islamic masculinity which is attributed to the practices adopted by religious figures and personalities, and ordinary persons seeking to live their lives according to the Quran and Sunnah (Aslam 90, 91). To the extent of History Lessons, it finds its manifestation in the person of the science teacher Ghulam Ahmed as well as the president whose role in the story is limited to the extent of a mention. Ghulam Ahmed with his beliefs and practices is a typical example of Islamic masculinity. The author also tells the people in the street call the president "The master with the kohl-lined eyes" which has cultural and Islamic import as indicated in Ahadeeth (the Prophet

Mohammad's (PBUH) sayings) related to the use of kohl, a preparation used especially in Arabia and Egypt to darken the edges of the eyelids (Meriam-Webster). The Islamic aspect of the president's masculinity is further reflected in the policy measures women under his government are resenting. The same is also true from the kind of moral cleansing the text refers to, which the likes of Ghulam Ahmed ardently support. So the President's masculinity with both the postcolonial as well as Islamic outlook can best be described as problematic as it draws from both the colonial masters as well as Islamic tradition. To the extent of Ghulam Ahmed, the mention of his beard, his prayer offerings, the prayer mat and his emphasis on moral policing of the youngsters indicates that he wears the orthodox Muslim version of masculinity. It is these two types of masculinity, the Colonial and the Islamic, which enjoy a hegemonic status in the story.

In the expository part of the narrative, the author tells Shahid's class is utterly disinterested in the day's history lesson on Aurangzeb, the Moghul emperor whose Islamisation project seems to have been replicated by the unnamed president of the story. Shahid is uninspired in teaching the lesson while the students too show little excitement about Aurangzeb's accomplishments. But the teacher and the students both have no choice in a conservative school environment. The students have to be schooled; the teacher too is duty-bound. They both have to swallow the history lessons.

The two selected stories offer clear instances of hegemonic masculinity which is exemplified in terms of subordination of women by men, and of men by men (Connell 77). Men enjoy privileges of being men, and conveniently embrace the hegemonic version of masculinity which "legitimizes unequal gender relations ..." (Messerschmidt 86). In Love in an Election Year various aspects and dimensions of hegemonic masculinity come into play when the question of

Salma's marriage arises. The authority of the father is unchallengeable, and what he decides is complied with without any protest on the part of male and female affectees of it. The status of masculinity is also determined by the age and economic standing of a male figure. Youth and lower economic status call to question the masculine credentials of a person. This is instanced in the case of a relatively young Javed bhai who is flippantly dismissed as if he is not man enough, and therefore not fit to marry Sughra. The two stories also offers diversity of masculine characters. This testifies to Connell's position about the plurality of masculinities (Kimmel, Bridges). There are instances of hegemonic males like Ghulam Ahmad, the fanatic science teacher in *History Lessons*, juxtaposed to more subdued ones like Shahid who easily retreats when the former flaunts his extremist muscle. Ghulam Ahmed could also be seen as an example of Muslim masculinity which directly draws from the colonial history of the Pakistani society. As Aslam explains, Muslim masculinities come into play when men take recourse to religious texts and sanctions to justify their hegemonic and hypermasculinized behaviours and personalities (90, 91). Ghulam Ahmed, being a staunch Muslim justifies even the flogging of ninth graders for the sake of moral correction. Furthermore, the model of masculinity bequeathed by the colonial master to the colonized, positions the male as assertive, strong, powerful and in control. It is this version which some of the characters seem to fashion their masculinity after. The cases discussed above, that is, Ghulam Ahmed and Sughra's father meet this criterion. Another important aspect that merits attention here is how women respond to hegemonic masculinities. As per Connell's formulation, and as stated above, hegemonic masculinity upholds unequal gender relations manifested in the subordination of women by men as well as men by men (77). In *Love in an Election Year*, women, as represented

by Baji Sughra, conveniently cave into the masculine authority. Her complete and convenient surrender to her hegemonic father is a prime example of emphasized femininity (Connell 183). In *History Lessons*, women are out in the streets to protest against laws that curtail their rights and freedom. This is an instance of institutional level effort to consolidate masculine hegemony, and to push women against the wall.

Deviant masculinities such as gays and homosexuals have not been touched upon in both the stories, except for a passing remark by Ghulam Ali when he betrays his heteronormative mindset by referring to Michael Jackson as "that American singer with a woman's face" (Naqvi 62). That both the stories do not deal with subordinate masculinities such as gays and homosexuals shows that the world as seen and presented by Tahira Naqvi is heteronormative.

#### 4. Conclusion

In the two selected stories, *Love in an Election Year* and *History Lessons*, hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities are sufficiently instanced. *Love in an Election Year* showcases dominance and hegemony of patriarchal masculinity which is rooted at personal, interpersonal, and ideological levels. Its 'code' of conduct, so to say, is deeply ingrained in the societal consciousness. Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity manifests itself in relation to both men and women. Female characters, having been conditioned and programmed vis-à-vis their defined gender roles, exhibit emphasized femininity thus informing the masculine hegemony. Non-hegemonic masculinities are instanced in the form of complicit and marginalized masculinities where the hegemonic position of patriarchal or politically strong authority is accepted.

The scope of the study could well be broadened to other stories from Naqvi's

collection to determine how masculinities are represented on the whole. It also needs to be examined if the author hints at any alternatives to the instances of hegemonic masculinities presented in these two stories. The research should act as a signpost for similar scholarly undertakings on Pakistani Anglophone literature. Such studies are expected to serve well in bringing out the literary representations of alternative/transformational masculinities, thereby leading to gender equality at societal level.

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