



RESEARCH PAPER

Rise Against Kyriarchy: Critical Examination of Imtiaz Dharker's "A Century Later"

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PAPER INFO

Received:
March 14, 2021

Accepted:
June 05, 2021

Online:
June 10, 2021

Keywords:
Century,
Education,
Imtiaz Dharker
Kyriarchy,
Women

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research paper is to investigate the way that Imtiaz Dharker has sketched her woman to rise and stand against kyriarchy in the poem "A century later." Since the rise of civilizations, women have been fighting against inequalities and economic, religious, and social disparities globally. There are various reasons for women's suppression such as, patriarchy, objectification, and kyriarchy, which would also serve as the foundation of our major analysis. Kyriarchy feeds the system of dominations under which individuals have some privileges. In the context of the poem, the notion of kyriarchy restricts women from pursuing education. Several studies have been conducted on women's harassment, divorce, abuse, and honor killing. The current study has examined the ways restrictions have been imposed on women's education. This research paper finds and concludes that a woman is inseparable from her right to be educated, independent, and self-determinant.

Introduction

Pakistani-born Indian-Scottish poet, filmmaker, and artist Imtiaz Dharker crowns herself with a profound understanding of various cultures and rampant social disparities associated with them. Dharker's poetry encompasses her diverse cultural experience, which imbues her poetic pillars. Her poetries have the unique characteristic of transculturality, describing female plight, and roaring against the marginalized and subaltern rank of women in society. Her writings reflect social tension emerging from an identity crisis, struggle to be ordinary, gender threats, and social insecurities among women, particularly in the sub-continent. Women have remained deprived of educational right besides social and political standings. According to Das (2017), reading Imtiaz Dharker's poetry from the lens of feminism helps to recognize how she attempted to create women's identity.

Literature review

Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (1992) developed the concept of kyriarchy to address the matters in feministic theories, from the root words Kyrios meaning "lord or master" and Archien meaning "to rule" (Bobel & Kissling, 2011) Kyriarchy defines a pattern of interlinked dominations (SchusslerFiorenza,1992: 8). The structural concept of kyriarchy considers social and institutionalized racism, sexism, transmisogyny, classicism, and other forms of dominations. The term kyriarchy centers around an interlocking social system that feeds domination, oppression, and submission among individuals or causes them to be unprivileged and privileged in some sense. Kyriarchy is an upgraded form of patriarchy, which acknowledges that gender is not the chief holder of one's power; it is the rule of masters not in the shape of father/patriarch but any elite man (Abrahams, 2005: 26-7; Schussler Fiorenza, 1992: 8, 117). In this paper, we will associate the concept of kyriarchy with the subjugation of women's educational rights, making them deprived of this power.

A literary work is a mere representation of society. In the poem "I speak for the devil," Dharker explores the feminine status in eastern and western contemporary societies (ShoukatAli,2017). In eastern mainstream society, extremist practices by few nationals and Islamic figures keep women under oppression. The education of women is considered bizarre and against the dogmas of society. Kyriarchy is a connecting bridge merging the gaps between post-feminism and second-wave feminism; it addresses the difference of perspective, beliefs, and experiences within the generation (Bruns 2010, p. 33). Women's inequality prevailed because men exercised power (Day,2002). Through different stages, a woman is dependent on a man, as a child dependent on father or brother, as an adult-dependent on husband and later on her male children (Begum,2018); this is due to very restriction and conservative attitude towards female education. The poem 'A Century Later' highlights the rise of women against kyriarchy in which woman smashes social dogmas related to their educational right. Dharker, in her collection "purdah and other poems," vehemently speaks against the mistreatment and oppression of women. Moreover, Dharker represents incessant suffering and continual toil of women to rise against the suppression and oppression (Bali,2015) woman have been put away within a grid of cultural displacement, gender politics, submissiveness, and domestic conflicts. Baig (2017), in her research on "Realism Vs. Magical Realism in Mohammad Hanif's Our Lady of Alice Bhatti," highlights that hanif has portrayed Alice Bhatti's female character struggles against the dominant male society and regains her feminine status in a patriarchal society. Another researcher Wasim (2019), in his research titled "Discovering the Voice of Women through Archetypes in Baba Bullay Shah's Verses," asserts that baba bully shah staunchly condemns the repression of women through his poetry and also talks about the elevated status of women which is not generally recognized in the dominant male society. Women have been predominantly under domestic violence, honor killing, acid attacks, and other forms of discrimination in Pakistan. Globally, a woman is viewed as one belonging to outgroups. Lack of literacy, awareness, and moral sense; have nurtured these societies into racist, dominants, and kyriarchal

practitioners. Women are often regarded as a men's property, by whose order she sleeps, wakes, and eats. Several restrictions on the woman include her right to education. This research will investigate women's struggle against kyriarchy and ideas related to Imtiaz Dharker's poem "A Century Later." Also, this can be considered as a gap in research; there are few pieces of research conducted on this poem and its central idea.

Material and Methods

The methodology for this research paper is qualitative, followed by textual, critical, and thematic analysis of the poem "A Century Later." For the most part, qualitative methods are intended to achieve the depth of understanding (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research tends to examine, compress the nature of a singular phenomenon, operation, and style that forms daily, giving it meaning (Wodak & Busch, 2004). The poem's original text will be used as the primary source to support the paper's aim. Textual analysis of the poem reveals the empowered representation of women put forward by Imtiaz Dharker and will expose the struggle of women to rise and stand against kyriarchy.

Data Analysis

*"The school-bell is a call to battle,
every step to class, a step into the firing-line"*

In the above lines, Dharker clearly describes the struggle of women on educational premises. The ways to control women have changed with the passage of time. Males have restricted and dominated women to advance in the field of education. Here **school bell** is defined as a **call to battle**. We know that the word school bell has, cheering connotations, such as off time, break time, or interval, whereas a call of battle has a poignant and chaotic connotation. It is interpretive from the beginning lines that attending school or any educational institution is not less than a battlefield for girls and women. Further, she pens, "*every step to class is a step to the firing line,*" which clearly explains school as a battlefield where girls and women have been called to stand in a line as enemies so that dominants and ordinates could fire them. This marginalization attributes to the social status of women in many parts of the world.

*"Here is the target, fine skin at the temple, cheek still rounded from being fifteen.
Surrendered, surrounded, she takes the bullet in the head"*

Educational Challenge and Women's Rise against it

Further, Dharker represents women/girls as a target to terrorists who are men and women against women's education. To pursue education is a war that a woman fights. Here, the lines; "*surrendered, surrounded, she takes the bullet in the head*" alludes to the incident of Malala Yousufzai. Let us briefly reference how these

lines and the poem's context alludes to this event. Malala Yousufzai, hailing from the Pushto family, was among the most active female students of her community was shot in the head by the Taliban on her way to school. Taliban are the sign of conservatism and restrictions imposed on women; they represent the extreme kyriarchal mindset. According to Martin (1998), men are represented and framed as oppressors who control, watch and re-define education. They aim to deprive women of education; they cannot see women's progress in society. Malala was the one who was the victim of such terrorist behavior. What did such people want to reveal? What is their ideology behind it? It does reveal their ideas of discrimination, racism, injustice, and gender-based violence at the heart of all universal human rights treaties, the standards, and values of gender equality, and non-discrimination. In Pakistan, the role of women in society, particularly in rural areas, is degraded. There is little consideration shown to women, and they have been poorly treated. In Pakistani women, the issue of education, early and forced marriages, acid attacks, domestic violence, and honor killings is grave. Pakistan is considered as third top country which is dangerous for women (Hadi, 2017). In the field of education, international human rights law forbids discrimination against women. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that Everyone has the right to education (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2010). We see that official reports say that women have an equal right to education, then why people, mainly males are behind women and their rights? This poem, "A Century Later," best addresses the issue and reveals how women compete against this dichotomy. Religious ideology, when radicalized, plays a major role in working against the democracy of the state. This system was regarded as anti-religious by fanatic elements in Swat. As a result, it systemically tried to eradicate this system especially targeting women's education. In this sense, violence, oppression, objectification, and restrictions become the norm. In the coming lines, which says, "*and walks on. The missile cuts, a pathway in her mind, to an orchard in full bloom, a field humming under the sun, its lap open and full of poppies*" Dharker utters that these bullets and missiles cannot diminish the spark and strength that a woman has. She uses diction like orchard, bloom, and sun, which juxtapose the strength of women with terrorism and marginalization. Words like Missiles, bullet, and battlefield connote patriarchal and kyriarchal mentality, which never want women to flourish.

Women's Courage and Strength

Next, "*this girl has won, the right to be ordinary*" Through the above lines, Dharker demonstrates what courage and strength look like in the face of violence and terror against women. The girl has won, represents how woman outcasts the notion of deprivation from receiving education. One significant thing is to note the lines which represent her winning of the right to be ordinary. Now the word 'Ordinary' means common or regular, education is also ordinary for men, but she has to fight to be ordinary like men when it comes to women. A woman has been oppressed under a subaltern psyche based on the social hierarchy of power and considers woman; prey to domination and confinement. Women's human rights cannot be alienated or isolated from general human rights; women's rights as human

rights are inseparable from the universe (Altinova et. al., 2016). In the last lines, "wear bangles to a wedding, paint her fingernails, go to school. Bullet, she says, you are stupid." Dharker unearths the consistent courage of a woman; who lives ordinarily and challenges the violence. According to (Celik 2012; Ozaydinlik, 2014), the universal human rights declaration states that men and women have complete autonomy to enjoy the right to education, health, and all forms of equality. Here we can draw another instance of kyriarchy; when Dharker writes wear bangles, paint her finger; she might intend to divert our intention towards the restrictions on women. We often see that society does not consider it ordinary when a girl wears bangles or paints her nails before marriage, or in a broader sense, she has no freedom to live jubilant life. Precisely, by no means a woman possesses self-determination, autonomy, and independent status because the clouds of kyriarchy always hover over her head. This poem reveals the inner zeal of a woman who castaways barriers to her education. "You have failed you cannot kill a book or the buzzing in it" implies that it is challenging to divorce a woman from her fanaticism to get an education. The sentence "You have failed" also alludes to Malala Yousufzai, when soon after the incident; she makes a public appearance and promises to continue her education despite any fences on her way. These lines do not convey the enthusiasm of a single woman but comprehend women's fraternity. The debate of kyriarchy is not limited to women in Pakistan; it also takes in the women from the sub-continent and the far-flung background. Here, patriarchy and kyriarchy are extensive. "You cannot kill a book," here, Dharker is not talking about the book; she aims to convey metaphorically the idea that you cannot simply slaughter a woman's knowledge; you cannot ruin the resources of women's independence.

Findings and Discussions

Through qualitative analysis of Dharker's poetry "A Century Later," the researcher has found that a woman is inseparable from her freedom, liberty, and educational right despite patriarchy and kyriarchy. Masculine efforts seem to diminish against women's rise. Another finding that I want to draw here is Dharker's representation of women as a soldier. Her idea matches our idea of rising against kyriarchy. Soldiers are supposed to win; however, in this case, women are on the winning belt. "One by one, the schoolgirls are standing up to take their places on the front line" is another reference to how women put down any discriminated system. According to King (2001), Intiaz Dharker attempts to convey social problems in poetic words through contextualizing her situation. Dharker has experienced living in the subcontinent; therefore, the poem germinates the status of women in the region.

On the contrary, it must be noted that she has suggested ways of curbing this social disease; a woman has to be strong and unleash her strength like Malala. The terrorist attack could not stop her from pursuing her goals; therefore, today, she represents women globally and internationally. The ideology of Dharker suggests a

brighter world for a woman despite rolling through thick and thorns in dominant male society. Wadhwa (2018) explored that in her poetry "Purdah," a woman is represented as a prisoner and puppet in the hands of society, which snatches away their right and choices to be independent. Our research finds that education and strength can bring out women from the social prison. The poem abolishes apprehension of women if they stand against the social system because Dharker's views are exemplary and optimistic that appeals to women's empowerment and rise. Escalation against kyriarchy is to accelerate towards education, career, success, and growth.

Conclusion

To sum up, this poem explains the struggle of women. It also preludes to the hidden discourse of how such dominating elements have created bogus consciousness and regularized such beliefs and behaviors in the social system. Moreover, this is why they are resistant to the idea of literature and education among women because it can challenge and thwart their established system. This is quite evident; in women's everyday lives across broad social, political, and economic domains. Systematic marginalization in the economic and social lives of the feminine gender has always been a well-established fact and practice, and this becomes an outlier for self-conscious entities. However, when women work against the status quo and break this conventionality, this becomes ordinary for them to be equal members of society. The complex web of systemic hegemony forces women to surrender in their social and economic lives and face dogmatic injustices. With this, the collective identity of women has been objectified as inferior, weak, and personal property to be used, misused, misguided, misunderstood, and maltreated. The poem "A Century Later" poses some inflated questions on the female condition and their struggle against domination. Our theoretical framework of kyriarchy underscores the subjugation of women's right to education. On the other hand, women have been given the privilege of domestic works such as nursing, babysitting, and cooking. We can never deny that education is a tool for empowerment, be it for men or women. Through the deep study of this poem and considering the contemporary examples of oppression against women, we conclude that women's ability to rise cannot be muffled by kyriarchal social structure. This protest poetry is the epitome of women empowerment and rises against all the odds and social discrimination.

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Appendix

A Century Later (2014)

Imtiaz Dharker

The school-bell is a call to battle,
every step to class, a step into the firing-line.
Here is the target, fine skin at the temple,
cheek still rounded from being fifteen.

Surrendered, surrounded, she
takes the bullet in the head

and walks on. The missile cuts
a pathway in her mind, to an orchard
in full bloom, a field humming under the sun,
its lap open and full of poppies.

This girl has won
the right to be ordinary,

wear bangles to a wedding, paint her fingernails,
go to school. Bullet, she says, you are stupid.
You have failed. You cannot kill a book
or the buzzing in it.

A murmur, a swarm. Behind her, one by one,
the schoolgirls are standing up
to take their places on the front line.