

## Ecocriticism: Crossing Boundaries between Human and Non-Human Spheres in Jamil Ahmed's *The Wandering Falcon*

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### Abstract

*Jamil Ahmed's The Wandering Falcon envisions the ecological landscape of the tribal areas of Pakistan as the first setting of man when he primarily trod the earth. Relating that every individual contains in his or her essence a "tribal gene", Jamil Ahmed empathises with the tribesmen of Balochistan, transforming them into everyman regardless of time and space. The brutally all-consuming natural terrain of Balochistan is highlighted through the four natural classical elements such as the wind, earth, water and fire, which according to ancient Greeks formed the basis of analysis in understanding both the natural and the material world. These non-human spheres whether it be the blistering wind of a hundred and twenty days, the wasted, barren land where the borders of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan meet, the waterhole where thirst ridden men find momentary respite or the fire and armour that the tribesmen always carry, demonstrate how the path between the natural and the human has refused to coalesce in harmony despite the struggle of the Pawindahs, these foot people, to keep it so. The dynamics of intervention are made more vividly clear through the character of Tor Baaz, whose name means the wandering falcon, and where he becomes a symbol of both human dissonance and the unforgiving non-human forces operating on man. Ironically enough it is through his character that Ahmed tries to provide a significant pathway where conflict and conservation of an old way of life overlap. Roaming the peripheral spaces amid tribes in the land, Tor Baaz becomes that liminal sphere within boundaries or borders that resist change to the new, adopted civilized way of life. Thus, Jamil Ahmed's ecocriticism not only endeavours to imagine a sustainable post-conflict framework but also subverts myth of barbarism regarded with tribal areas by the feigned world of civility.*

**Keywords:** *Ecocriticism, Tribal man, Human, Non-Human, Borders*

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### Introduction

Ecocriticism is a generally known term that acknowledges the relationship between literature and ecology of a text while emphasizing what role nature

plays and how it impacts numerous thematic or linguistic concerns in the literary text. Broadly, ecocriticism revolves around nature and its various forms venturing into identifying its implications in literature. Nature



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becomes the primary forefront in which the dynamics of the novel operate, impacting on characters, symbols, motifs and themes of a literary text. Ecocriticism is an evolving theory that not only establishes nature as a non-human living entity but also presents nature as an existential being before the creation of man. When living nature is juxtaposed with humans, it is this complexity while analysing the ecology of a text that makes the study of ecocriticism unique. Moreover, certain recent researchers have recognized that ecocriticism not only discusses nature as a physical terrain that comprises of the natural landscape or weather conditions but is also an analysis of the environment in terms of society, politics and history that reciprocate in building up the characters in a text as much as the physical terrain would. Ecocriticism in South Asian writers is rapidly gaining momentum as many literary writers, poets and novelists are experimenting with this genre while writing. In Indian literature most notably Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* have been predominantly discussed with regard to ecocriticism. In Ghosh's novel, man is presented as an adversary of nature, manipulating and eroding it, with the onslaught of modernity, resulting in nature being changed by man as wilderness in nature is hostile to man's touch and problematic to conserve. While *Nectar in a Sieve* establishes ecofeminism and a woman's linkage with the natural landscape around it. This displays the interdependence and non-separation of women and their connection with the

land. In Sri Lankan fiction, novels such as *The Waiting Earth* (1966) by Punyekante Wijenaike, and *Reef* (1994) by Romesh Guncsekera provide hints of ecocriticism where the writers talk about land ownership, territoriality along with the conservation of natural resources that establishes Sri Lanka's nationalism in a poignantly significant and allegorical manner.

### **Ecocriticism in Pakistani Literature**

In Pakistani literature, the importance of ecocriticism was significantly laid by Qurat-ul-ain Haider's *Magnum Opus River of Fire*. In this novel, Haider traces the historical connection of man with its natural environment or land. The historical connection with land becomes of intrinsic value as through the civilizational ethos, Haider discovers that as a man loses his rooted understanding of nature or its environmental surroundings he becomes subject to many psychological traumas including diaspora and identity crisis. In Soraya Khan's *Noor*, the territorial rift between East Pakistan and West Pakistan is portrayed as a direct reflection of man's encroachment of nature in terms of humanistic barbarity that severed the connection of the land resulting in the creation of a new state i.e. Bangladesh. Moreover, Uzma Aslam Khan's *Geometry of God* is another primary example of how ecology is outlined through a geological pattern of cultural evolution in the historical context of Pakistan.



However, among Pakistani literary figures, Jamil Ahmed was the first among writers that emphasized Pakistan's ecological landscape especially the western half of this country and visualized the importance of its environment and the impact it had on Pakistan's political, social and foreign affairs in the geological mainframe of South Asia. Born in 1931, Jamil Ahmed served as a civil servant in the 1950s and was often posted to the remote areas of Pakistan such as the Swat Valley, northern areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Waziristan in Balochistan. These regions are primarily connected with tribes of various clans that have lived there for several centuries. Ahmed hence got a first-hand experience of the tribal areas and the tribesmen's fascinating connection with the land. *The Wandering Falcon* (2011) is Jamil Ahmed's much-acclaimed debut novel that imaginatively brings to life human concerns in the war-ridden tribal frontiers that have been marginalized by history and time. Being a recently written novel, the existing criticism on *The Wandering Falcon* is extremely minimal, and if there is, it largely discusses the thematic concerns in the novel, revolving around the poverty-stricken tribesmen in the western half of Pakistan. The novel's relationship with ecocriticism has hardly been credited regarding the tribal areas and their deep-rooted connection with the territorial spaces that they reside within and borderlines that define their existence.

## Discussion

In the novel, *The Wandering Falcon*, Jamil Ahmed brings a distinctively Pakistani way of writing into the mainstream of contemporary fiction. *The Wandering Falcon* imbibes a narrative that is both engagingly lyrical and intriguingly post-modern. Ahmed blends the inert processes of the tribal man's experience through a thread of short stories that make the mode of narration in his novel *The Wandering Falcon*, quite adaptable and changing, very much like the tribal way of life. Ahmed incorporates ecocriticism through a discourse that bespeaks the tribal existence and aims an attempt at self-discovery. This self-discovery is directly synced with the discovery of a nation, Pakistan and what it means to recognise and appreciate fully Balochistan as a part of the nation itself. Through tribesmen's collective experiences and the use of ecocriticism, Ahmed has allegorically implicated the importance of this part of the land that has remained aloof, nameless and fluid in time, with no one truly owning or appreciating it as a land that breeds human individuals.

Thus, ecocriticism becomes an important technique that portrays Ahmed's distinguished postmodern worldview at its best. The practice of ecocriticism in the novel tries to crucially cultivate harmony between tradition and modernity, body and mind, and fact and fiction. The exploration of the tribal terrain in a close and acute manner is an attempt at eradicating boundaries between nature



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and culture, language and reality aiming at presenting the process of ecocriticism as a struggle to overcome these barriers of the subjective self. The pictorial imagery and the descriptions used by Ahmed suggest how ecology mediates all our experience. Thus it is interesting to see how Ahmed blends the tribal way of life with that of the civil and urban existence of Pakistan.

The landscape of Jamil Ahmed's expression in his novel *The Wandering Falcon* is laden with a collage of nature descriptions and experiences that structurally encompass the novel in a reality that bespeaks the tribal culture, "In the tangle of crumbling, weather-beaten and broken hills, where the borders of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan meet, is a military outpost manned by about two score soldiers" (Ahmed 1). These beautifully constructed opening lines suggest, the tribal existence as imbibing literally in-between border areas of these countries like a tangle of crumbling hills, unacknowledged and battered with time. Although assaulted by time, the tribesmen remain undefeated and resilient in their capacity, constantly struggling against all natural and unnatural forms. The novel, discloses these descriptions of the land, in its most unforgiving and punitive form that bespeaks the nature of man living in these peril ridden lands. The tribes have their own laws, laws made through ancient customs that are absolute and unforgiving like the harshness in the physical outer sphere of nature. Yet within these laws abide tribesmen that are extremely

human in their capacity to err, humans that have been unable to reconcile their own inner natural instincts and desires against the onslaught of outer aggression.

*The Wandering Falcon* begins with such a story of a man and a woman who have eloped together and run from their respective tribe. The woman being the tribal chief's daughter had an impotent man as her husband and consequently eloped with her father's servant. Ahmed's descriptions of them roaming a desolate landscape in absolute helplessness is synonymous with universal stories such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Adam and Eve*, where the protagonists in question had exceeded the laws of their territory and were hence ousted from there forthwith. Later in the novel, it is stated that "Adam was the first Baluch on this earth" (32). Thus Jamil Ahmed grants the tribal story and the Baluch people, a universality, transforming them into everyman and gives them an empathy that has been previously denied to this part of the land. Moreover, this transformation of Baluch people into everyman indicates Ahmed's transcultural approach, because certain boundaries or limitations may be transgressed by anyone in a culture or region and then labelled as a sin. This novel consistently reprimands how mankind has conditioned boundaries for one another whereas the question, who defines these limitations remains questionable. Why is it that those bred and born under English school systems govern and decide a certain way of life as acceptable or unacceptable? Hence,



highlighting the Baloch people as Adam, Jamil Ahmed transcends the borders and the culture of Pakistan and evokes a primaeval natural truth of man regardless of time, history or space.

Similarly, land, as an ecological element is not specific to a particular culture or region. The land is stretched endlessly beneath man, it is man that develops culture around a specific piece of land. Wherever man is, the land is synced psychologically with man. However, it is the closing of the borders around Balochistan that has resulted in men born and bred inside to be specific to its terrain. Therefore, this landlocked region has refused to evolve or coalesce transcultural elements within its framework. According to Opsopaus the fact that "The Earth, is cool and dry, passive and rigid, a principle of structure and materialization" (n.pag), has become the psychological make-up of the men living in the tribal regions. Jamil Ahmed embodies these attributes of the earth and links them psychologically, with the tribesmen. While focusing "extensively upon physical reality", that reflects the earth, Ahmed tends to point towards their "qualities such as perseverance, inflexibility, realism and pragmatism" in the tribal men. For example, in the novel, Ahmed states that the "pervading silence of their land had taught their people to be deliberate in their actions and slow in response to their emotions" (29). The rigid, hard natural terrain has a directly proportional link with the tribesmen's psychological makeup and what the author tries to convey is that these men

must be understood in their own context without a comparison with those who are born and bred in a different ecology. The evidence of the tribesmen's separate state of mind and their ability to look at things differently is portrayed through the words, "what seemed to them a palace was in fact the local post office" (Ahmed 29). This divide or distance in the perception of tribesmen is something that has developed over a history of conditioned upbringing that has refused to coalesce the mind of the tribesmen with that of the laws and rules of the society associated with civilization.

At the beginning of the story, the "unearthly expression" (Ahmed 3) on the woman's face, depicts disharmony between the land and the human psyche, demonstrating how the tribesmen's own laws can at times be a barricade to their natural instincts. Thus, not only does this establish her severed connection with the land but also reflects her dismantled psychological reality. Similarly, in the story of the woman whose husband owns a bear for a living, the woman is symbolically paralleled with the bear. By doing this, Jamil Ahmed further highlights the antagonistic connection of the woman with her natural animalistic primaeval instincts which is only brought out in the woman's hostile interaction with the bear. Land represents the natural instinctive needs and behaviours of humans. But, somehow these primaeval instincts or their natural human nature has remained buried within. Thus, through analogies with physical nature, Ahmed



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connects with the disparate psychology of the tribal people with and within their own land.

Carl Jung states that “the four elements [earth, water, fire and air] are not only material and spiritual forces, but also facets of a human being. Their varying combinations result in different personality types”. Carl Jung's “conceptualization of intuition, sensation, thinking and feeling as the four basic archetypes or components of personality is ... a derivation of Empedocles' ancient theories about fire, earth, air and water” . Fire, earth, air and water are manifestations of moods and personality that express human emotions. Ahmed clearly states this when he is narrating about the tribes of the Mahsuds and the Wazirs, “Nature has bred in both an unusual abundance of anger, enormous resilience, and a total refusal to accept their fate” (86). Thus, not only is nature responsible for making them who they are but also for their inner disharmonies. Anger is an expression of fire, the resilience that Ahmed talks about is representative of the earth. Thus, this theory by Jung links the human and non-human elements together signifying how the outer nature cannot be kept at bay from the inner nature of man as they're naturally synced. This inability to reconcile human boundaries with those of the land is the root of all historical dichotomy in the tribal existence. An acute example of this is given when in the novel the government has decided to close the international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan

resulting in an abrupt close of seasonal migration of the tribes between these borders. This migration is their natural form of existence, the tribes must migrate to the highlands with the onslaught of spring and return to the plains as autumn approaches where their animals can find food, water and respite from the harsh winter. Nature is synchronized with the tribal way of life, like the soul is to the body, as the narrator in the novel proclaims, “it would be like attempting to stop migrating birds or the locusts” (Ahmed 46) if the tribesmen are stopped from migrating. The closing of the borders, marks the divide and rift created among the nomads or Pawindahs, the foot people not just against the governing authorities of Pakistan or Afghanistan but also defining a “death of a centuries-old way of life” (54) that harmed no one and yet was brutally and completely demolished. The foot people or Pawindahs have a direct connection with the land as they are habitual of walking on foot in the harsh natural terrain. Interestingly, this nomadic existence doesn't allow for transculturation to take place. This is because the tribesmen over centuries have refused to transform themselves according to the so-called civilized society. Nowadays, transculturation is considered an inevitable norm, that is bound to happen at some point in time and in an attempt to precipitate transculturation by society, the inherent culture of a region like Baluchistan is destroyed. However, what Jamil Ahmed tries to proclaim is that transculturation should mean an acceptance of an individual way of life



rather than an imposition of a general way of life onto a specific region.

The second primordial element, water, in *The Wandering Falcon* is demonstrated as a symbol of respite, relief and the inevitable flux of time and change that dissolves and eradicates distinctions. It is by the waterhole that Tor Baaz, the boy whose parents have just been killed finds momentary solace. The waterhole provides nourishment and security in the desolate and harsh terrain. In the last paragraphs of chapter one, the author seems to relate the tribesmen's lives to that of living "at the edge of the waterhole dipping their beaks in the water and flying away back into the sun" (Ahmed 18). Ultimately, the tribal people only experience a fleeting hour of comfort, naturally returning to their harsher existence as a form of nature's calling. Nature returns them to unnatural habitats where they have learnt to live naturally and survive for years. The tribesmen's existence is always in a flux continuously moving or mobile, searching for the basic necessities of life but ironically their movement is fixed and resolute within a periphery consisting only of the unyielding rugged lands of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and bordering parts of Afghanistan.

According to , "every element of the rural idyll is torn apart by some agent of change" (1), and it can be seen that the tribesmen's lives in this context remain similar. This element of change is represented by water. However, sometimes even water appears to be

hostile in similitude with and adopting the overall harshness in nature, "no water other than a trickle among some salt-encrusted boulders which also dries out occasionally, manifesting a degree of hostility" (Ahmed 1). Water is also scarce in this part of the world, adding to their harsh existence and giving more room to the rigidity represented by the earth. Water in the Greek interpretation is referred to as Primordial Chaos, where water represents dissolution, transformation and a formless entity constantly changing or moving. Water is symbolic of the ever-changing and impermanent life of the tribal men who cannot remain constant at one place. It is their norm and custom as any other form of existence is alien to them. However, in constant contrast with the civilian or governmental accord, the tribal way of life is viewed as chaotic and completely in rival with what they define as normality. Ahmed narrates that the tribal way of life "constituted defiance to certain concepts ... concepts such as statehood, citizenship, undivided loyalty to one state; settled life as opposed to nomadic life, and the writ of the state as opposed to tribal discipline" (38). These concepts are those that the world associates with civilization, rejecting the old ways of tribal life, forgetting them as a form of undisciplined, formless or baseless existence.

Moreover, the third element wind or air interestingly sweeps in the entire mood of the novel itself, Ahmed narrates that, "Nature has not remained content merely at this. In this land, she



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has also created the dreaded bad-e-sad-o-bist-roz, the wind of a hundred and twenty days” (1). Wind generally is a corrosive element in nature that erodes away existence as one knows it. But the wind in this region of Baluchistan exceeds all limits in its capacity to destroy. It not only blows consecutively for days on end but also envelops individuals in its “alkali-laden dust and sand” (1) in the depth of winter. The element of wind commemorates the direction of what is to follow in the tribesmen's lives, whether it is the onslaught of danger or a warning. Wind commences the advancement of the winter season, a season that portends a change in the lives of the tribesmen. For winter means migration from the harsh coldness of the mountain tops to the plains, in a long and perilous journey; “Gusts of high winds had raged over the mountain tops... Winter was coming early this year and the mountain people were wondering whether to risk staying for a few weeks longer in their huts or start moving ... on their three hundred mile annual journey to the plains” (Ahmed 143). Winter also means a harsher existence not only because a short winter means less time for gathering their sustenance but also because winter becomes the “time of raids, kidnappings and robberies” (Ahmed 87). The element of wind not only defines the element of change in the direction of the tribesmen's lives because change is evident for them as these wandering men cannot have steadiness in themselves but as a natural calamity that the tribesmen must abide in. Even in the form of wind, nature has remained harsh, the winter or

dry cold winds are corrosive and do not allow respite and are unforgiving in its wake.

The fourth element, fire, is the core element that links the entire tribal history with the historical happenings of this region with respect to Pakistan, Afghanistan and other countries that have waged a war against the tribal areas. Ahmed narrates a story of seven men who come to the police station for talks with the authorities, Baloch people who have seen their own Sardar removed without their consent and have faced the loss of death equally as the opposing side and yet are willing to have a parley. But nobody is willing to understand where the problem stemmed or to understand the Baloch perspective and why they were actually retaliating against the authorities so. The Baloch people's willingness to be given a platform to raise their voice is demeaned as the magistrate only perceives their side of the story as an acceptance of the crime, giving a complete disregard to their perspective. Ahmed foreshadows this untimely and abrupt dismissal of the problem by saying, “Before the evening lamps had been lit, the trial was over” (33). Fire is an element that reeks of passion and spontaneity, but the fire of the Baloch people is doused so completely unapologetically that it never even pricks the conscience of those responsible. Ahmed narrates after the death of these seven men that “these men died a final and total death ... what died with them was a part of the Baloch people themselves. A little of their spontaneity in offering affection and



something of their graciousness and trust" (34). Fire as an element of nature has been deliberately beguiled by Jamil Ahmed, deceptively by representing it through the unnatural, i.e. the guns and armour the tribesmen use. This artillery that the tribesmen always carry with them is integral to their natural way of survival and living. Existence for the tribesmen is inconceivable without the fire that they always sling around their shoulders. As in ancient times the natural cultivation of land bred food, Mullah Barrerai states that battle or war is a tribesman's natural way of earning a living, by saying that "two reasons that were being given for the gathering of the tribes against the British government, one was religion, and the other was money" (Ahmed 22). The tribesmen's uncertain futures are linked with the armour that they are synced with. This fire that kills others is primarily a reason responsible for the fire of the kiln or stove that cooks and prepares food for them in their private domains. Thus, the warm hearth in their homes is directly linked with the forced battles they must be involved in and hence the ambivalent nature of their home remains constant throughout their existence and so does their widespread dislocation. Significantly the element of fire brings out the most distinct form of marriage between the human and non-human elements i.e. that of the unflinching heroic warrior spirit and the modernized weaponry adopted to achieve their ends. The seeming blend of both elements arbitrarily defines the roots of tribal existence.

Across the tribal belt, "Ahmad's expansive and intimate voice accentuates the smallness of the characters' lives while offering vivid glimpses into each individual's struggle for dignity and a foothold in the world".

The dichotomy between the natural and the unnatural remains blurred when "a migrating herdsman accepts both an unexpectedly lush pasture and a relentless sandstorm his way...in the land that nourishes and bedevils them". Contradictory elements of nature within and without a tribesman's life have learnt to co-exist for a resilient survival.

According to Johnson "Nature conventionally is that which is distinct from the human" (n.pag). Nature consists of "a constellation or cluster of qualities and attributes – the nature of a thing, or person. Nature is primal, the 'natural'. Nature invariably implies ontology" (Johnson) and, within this interpretation, the most vital part of nature is the "concern of systems of belief and religious traditions of the world". Throughout the world, the concept of nature is undoubtedly "influenced substantively by theological and religious orientation. Religion, then, is a "natural" approach to the study of nature" (Johnson). Thus, religion being an integral part of the tribesmen's lives forms a natural part of their existence. Just as Mullah Barrerai uses religion as a bait to survive, Dawa Khan, in an iconic scene in the novel, shows how the spheres drawn by the governmental policies refuse to



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transcend their limitations even in the face of the same religion, the only aspect of commonality that exists to unite these provinces as one nation. Jamil Ahmed narrates this when Gul Jana's tribe needs mere water for their animals as they had been travelling for two days and if the animals didn't have the water they will die. However, the army officers cannot allow them to cross into their vicinity. Gul Jana believes that she can oust the differences between her tribe and the local government by carrying the Koran over her head, "The camels must not die. I am going with a Koran on my head. Nothing can happen to me" (Ahmed 18). Jamil Ahmed demonstrates that the modern civilized world remains indiscriminate even to the sanctity and sacred values of religion, "They had hardly gone fifty yards when two machine guns opened up from either side and mowed down the camels. The firing was indiscriminate. Men, women, and children died. Gul Jana's belief that the Koran would prevent tragedy died, too. Dawa Khan fell dead in the raking fire" (Ahmed 18).

To conclude, *The Wandering Falcon* imbibes qualities of impartial rigidity in its natural descriptions. The dry ravines, dry winds and the corrosive hardened and dry earth breathe men that are fixed and structured, defined by their own form as opposed to moist and expansive surroundings that maybe adaptive to civilizational changes. These are men defined by their own shape and bounds but never understood in it by the outside world, in their own

context. The Mahsuds, Wazirs or the Afridis are separate clans living in the western belt of Pakistan and yet each of them is defined and governed by their own natural and territorial boundaries. By relating and delving deeper into the stories of each of these tribes, Jamil Ahmed crosses their natural and human spheres that had remained enclosed for centuries. *The Wandering Falcon* is an attempt to foreground that transculturation of humanities in a postmodern world is extremely essential. This will not only eradicate darker myths related to marginalized regions such as Balochistan but also create a coherent worldview. The natural outside world has harmonised itself in the collective unconscious of these tribesmen who continuously remain very human in their honour driven capacity to err and make peace.

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## Dynamics of Surveillance and Discovery of Self in Musharraf Ali Farooqi's *The Story of a Widow*

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### Abstract

*This qualitative research identifies Foucault's idea of panoptical surveillance (1995) based on Jeremy Bentham's ideal prison in *The Story of a Widow* by Musharraf Ali Farooqi. Research draws parallel between 'panopticon' and societal surveillance which is in the form of traditions, norms, male gaze and resistance strategies and traces behaviour of characters in response to surveillance. The character of novel's protagonist – Mona is particularly analyzed through panoptic lens of theory. This study traces notion of "ideology" and "interpellation" from Althusser's essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1971) in order to depict struggle of Mona against ideological surveillance. Social ideologies form identity of individuals and thrust their power and subjection on Mona who in turn fights for creating her own identity. The research endeavours to explore struggle of women in finding 'Self' under societal surveillance and ideologies which hail people as 'subjects'. It also aims to study whether it is possible for a woman to attain self-satisfaction by rebelling against prevailing societal notions which act as hurdle in practicing their rights or not. This research will further help to discover dynamics of power and authority for both genders and shall establish humanistic approach of gender equality. It will aid in inculcating the notion that societal surveillance should be beneficial for growth of all individuals rather than restricting the autonomy of some (women) in society which leads to social unrest.*

**Keywords:** ideology, interpellation, panopticon, resistance, surveillance

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### Introduction

Man's actions and behaviours are not the result of isolation. Since man is a social animal, there are societal forces which influence individual's actions and contribute in their psychological fabrication. Thereby, the aim of this research is to determine that social forces like patriarchal notions

and stereotypical norms act as surveillance in society and in *Story of a Widow* protagonist's actions and psyche is affected at large by this social surveillance. The level of influence these forces wield on characters particularly on Mona and their surroundings is looked upon in this research by the use of theoretical framework of "Panoptic Surveillance"



and concept of ideology from "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus". This study also endeavours to establish that it is not only the patriarchy to which women have to fight against rather these are their notions about themselves as a weaker sex. The theoretical blueprint for subjection and identity formation in *The Story of a Widow* is based on Louis Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses".

Musharraf Ali Farooqi is Hyderabad born Pakistani-Canadian writer, translator and essayist and has created world's first digital Urdu thesaurus. This well-read author of seven books and several translations got his massive store of knowledge by getting early education from Hyderabad and later from Karachi and spending time in university of Toronto Library for researches.

Farooqi's reverence for sub continental culture and heritage, his interest in Urdu tradition— Dastan and his fiction raising concerns of Pakistani society – all save his position among critically acclaimed Pakistani writers. *The Story of a Widow* although realistically portrays lives of widows and their dealings with social world from Pakistani culture. It serves as an appeal for individual freedom of females so that they can enjoy their basic right of happiness.

Women and their position in society are illustrated with open mind by Farooqi in his fiction. He has addressed to their issues by depicting

their psychological construction including their yearnings, desires, hopes and emotions in his works. He has portrayed unconventional women who struggle to break the norms and change the notion that women cannot exercise their will in many situations in life. Mona as a widow in *The Story of a Widow* and Gohar Jan as tawaif in *Between Clay and Dust* are subjugated by social forces but despite their psychological and physical domination as members of patriarchal hegemonic society, they rise from their assigned roles as a woman and exercise their will for pursuit of their happiness.

The stance of women empowerment is presented by Farooqi. By tracing the role of society in shaping lives of women, he has thrown light on their weaknesses, strengths and limitations. Thereby, this research also aims to establish that by depicting the difficulties of the environment in which women live and the challenges which his female characters face, Farooqi is calling for change and inculcating in the minds of his readers that they need to be more considerate in their dealings with women and get rid of their rigid norms which suffocate them. This is dug out from *The Story of a Widow* in this research through surveillance. Another of Farooqi's messages of women taking initiative for themselves in this novel is traced out through "interpellation" principle from essay of *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus* by Althusser (1971).

The current research traces dynamics of Panopticism in *The Story*



of a Widow. Foucauldian notion of panoptic surveillance is rooted in Jeremy Bentham's 'Panopticon' which is architectural design of a prison in which prisoner's behaviour is surveilled through tower at centre of the prison and this presence of all seeing gaze is felt by prisoners who are totally disconnected from outside world and are perfectly individualized. The surveillance helps to regulate discipline in prisoners. Foucault treated the idea of surveillance at social level by removing the walls of prison and noticed it on more general level. In *The Story of a Widow* the behaviour of the characters is moulded by social forces such as patriarchy, culture and traditional norms. They act as societal surveillance and character of Mona feels trapped by this external presence and face psychological and emotional punishment when thinks and acts to unburden herself from this surveillance. There are various ways in which she tries to resist it including psychological struggle of rationalizing the consequences of her actions and "confession". Making confessions is another behavioural response to panoptic surveillance. Like the prisoners who confess under distress, Mona unfolds past events under pressure out of frustration.

This research also aims to study the role of ideology in formation of one's identity. Althusser's essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" investigates the processes in which state exerts control over its subjects through Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) and

Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA's) in order to reproduce its productive power. He establishes the ultimate power of ideology which is "inescapable" and categorizes individuals as subjects. The concept of "interpellation", dynamics of ideologies in influencing behaviour of people and extent of autonomy of man under the web of ideologies will be discovered in *The Story of a Widow*. Since "ideology is eternal" (Althusser,1971,p.161), it means that dominant forces of ideology will keep on hailing individuals as "subjects". Surveillance through the norms and ideologies which demands the fulfilment of some roles from individuals both influence the behaviour and set path for them to follow, therefore the close link between concept of ideology and surveillance will aid to trace the quest for identity in novel.

### Research Questions:

This research shall explore:

1. How norms act as surveillance and exert their power on individuals of the society?
2. Is it possible to change one's position as subject?
3. Can an individual form his own identity? If yes then how?

This study will provide sufficient answers to these questions through examples from the text.

### Literature Review

Panoptic surveillance is a



theoretical framework which has been applied in literary field for study of human behaviour which is shaped by social forces and institutions. Surveillance acts as a form of control. Actions, behaviour and psychological working of characters living under constant surveillance in their public and private lives are observed in this framework. The power dynamics of the surveillance is the area specially focused while its application.

“Ideology” from essay Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus is the other literary theory used in the research. It is applied on literary works to see the working of ideologies in society and their relation with people belonging to different classes of society for their identity formation.

In an online blog, Richard Marcus while presenting Review of The Story of a Widow reveals that through Mona's character one can relate to the treatment of people towards a widow of certain age. She was courageous to act as someone twenty years younger of her age and pursue her pleasures. If someone dies and leaves a label of widow indicating someone's death to a person, it does not mean that that person also has to act as dead thus, challenging rigid practices of certain norms (blog.critic.org).

In another book review of The Story of a Widow Daisy Rockwell comments that novel reveals story of a woman from daily life, her interactions within social and familial sphere

provide an “intimate portrait of private life” in Pakistan that gives a good deal of information on life in this country and how women in general strive for their happiness like Mona- a sensitive woman explores “possibility of love and independence” in this novel. (The Sunday Guardian-India)

Samia Saif (2013) in her online journal explores gender dynamics in The Story of a Widow. She traces the “patriarchal control” in society that snatches the autonomy of Mona but she shows resilience and continues to defy patriarchal restrictions for her “self growth” (Saif, 2013, p. 8). According to her, title is not portraying the actual stance given by author which is to give women courage to break through the obstacles which restrict them in society and get rid of their cowardly self. The basic concern of novel is to provide a good understanding of gender roles and to seek sense of “independence in life” (Saif, 2013, p.11). This research also explores some of the similar concerns pointed out by Saif, but the novel is analyzed under two literary frameworks.

The literary application of Panoptic Surveillance is observed in the article by Sharhram and Yari (2013) who have explored it in Kafka's The Castle .Castle in the novel acts as “panopticon” and it asserts control. A presence is felt and its influence operates through notion of Klammm who presumably maintains rules on the land (Yari, 2013, p. 57). Kafka has created prison like world controlled by whimsical leaders where power



structures are working by spreading fear of being observed among the villagers to maintain “individual discipline and social stability” (Yari, 2013, p. 56). The concept of power through Foucauldian Panopticon is applied to show brutality of system that limits the individual rights and reduces personal autonomy.

Sayyed Shahabeddin Sadati has traced functioning of Ideological State Apparatuses and importance of ideology in Baraka's *In Memory of Radio*. According to him Baraka in poem is indicative of how ideologies of white people are dominating over lives of Blacks in America even through machine like radio which is used as a tool to inculcate white mentality during early decades of 20th century (Sadati, 2013, p. 483).

Musharraf Ali Farooqi's *Between Clay and Dust* has received much critical appraisal. Portrayal of woman such as Gohar Jan and Malka in this novel has been a subject of special attention for critics in book reviews. But *The Story of a Widow* has not been analyzed and concerns of Farooqi in this novel are still needed to be worked upon and brought out in academic field. To fill this gap, the thesis is conducted. Moreover, though Panoptic Surveillance has been applied on social and architectural level but its application on literary texts is still limited. Thus, application of two theories on the novel will deconstruct various aspects of the novel.

## Research Methodology

As a qualitative research, this study makes use of interpretive techniques to formulate connection between theory and text. Musharraf Ali Farooqi's novel *The Story of a Widow* is primary text for this research. In the light of Michel Foucault's 1975 book *Discipline and Punish* and Louis Althusser's essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” compiled in Ben Brewster translated book of Althusser's essays; *LENIN AND PHILOSOPHY and OTHER ESSAYS*, the theories of Surveillance and Ideology are applied on novel. Primary text for this thesis is Farooqi's *The Story of a Widow*. Secondary sources like scholarly articles, magazines interviews, essays and other critical material have also been extensively reviewed and carefully analyzed for incorporation of relevant ideas within the study. Musharraf Ali's *Between Clay and Dust* had also been studied to understand portrayal of women in his works. Furthermore, primary text has insufficient critical material on it. Therefore, criticism has mainly been compiled from book reviews and material available on author's website.

## Discussion and Analysis

Panoptic Surveillance is a method of controlling and regulating the behaviour of individuals in society. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Michel Foucault refined idea of Bentham's “Panopticon” and removed the walls of prison to bring the notion of observing the behaviour of people at



social level under the surveillance of different institutions.

In the novel *The Story of a Widow*, society acts as “Panoptic machine” in which character's behaviour is formed, regulated and moulded by norms and traditions (Foucault, 1995, p. 217). Since, novel is set in Karachi and norms are very much influenced by patriarchy, the protagonist Mona is under constant surveillance of social norms, stereotypical thinking, taboos and male gaze in the form of portrait of her former husband and men around her. The power exerted by societal surveillance causes internalization of behaviour therefore character act in novel accordingly. Hence, “our society is one not of spectacle but of surveillance” (Foucault, 1995, p.217). The individuals in their daily life are influenced by these external forces of norms which establish power of some and snatches autonomy of others; in novel females, especially Mona bears the burden of this surveillance the most. The portrait of Akbar Ali – late husband of Mona has a strong impact on her life. “Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concentrated form distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights and gazes”(Foucault, 1995, p. 202) and in novel, gaze of Akbar Ali presents patriarchal presence and male gaze in Mona's life. This presence has so much influence that even fact of his being dead has not changed his position of exerting power; “when she looked at the portrait she felt Akbar Ahmad is still with her” (Farooqi, 2009.p. 1).

Dominance of Akbar Ahmad's gaze is prevalent throughout the novel whether it concerns to trivial matter of Mona's spending to that of her second marriage, her relation with her sister to her married life with Salamat Ali and even her thoughts are controlled by his gaze as “she found it inescapable”(Farooqi, 2009, p.222). When Hina who is Mona's sisters tells her to feel “free” in taking her decision regarding second marriage and people will compare her would be husband with her late husband, “she found it ironic that Akbar Ahmad seemed a greater part of her life now than when he was alive”(Farooqi, 2009, p. 63). After marrying again, she felt the pressure of Akbar Ahmad's presence even greater, every time she looked at portrait “it seemed to have grown little bigger” (Farooqi, 2009, p.124). This presents societal gaze in the form of a norm that a woman should be committed to only one man who is her husband and woman as a widow especially of middle age who marries again is not seen with respectable eyes. Moreover, the moral pressure in the form of memory of their former husbands, become sometimes hurdle in happiness of a new marriage. For example, when Mona's daughter objects that why she has worn a sari which her father had gifted her after his death, she feels burdened by his gaze and ponders that his “presence had never loomed so large in house, even when he was alive” (Farooqi, 2009, p.125).Mona faces these dilemmas in novel and feels as if Akbar Ahmad is mocking her; “she could see the sardonic look on his face” (Farooqi,



2009, p. 169). There are several other incidents in which portrait's control burdens her. While considering proposal of Salamat Ali she saw "Akbar Ahmad watching her with curious expression" and "under his gaze", she contemplated that her life is not completely bad without any man in her life at which "Akbar Ahmad suddenly looked pleased" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 65). Hence, her decisions and thoughts are heavily influenced by his controlling gaze.

Sense of being watched is rooted firmly in *The Story of a Widow*. The literal gaze is present in novel which is sensed by Mona at several occasions. Salamat Ali observed Mona's life through his "binoculars" from his balcony before marrying her. Mona also felt some sort of intrusion; "she wandered if he was secretly watching her. She suspected he was. She sometimes felt his presence" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 22). This shows that how some members of society literally observe movement of females especially of single women to exploit them. In Cinema she becomes conscious of "Salamat Ali's gaze on the back of her neck" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 25). While shopping she felt as if she is being watched by group of men near her – "she felt their eyes on her body" (Farooq, 2009, p. 151). Hence surveillance of men in the form of literal gaze reduces woman into a commodity to be consumed and to be controlled over.

Being watched is encountered by mix feelings of awe, joy, frustration

and fear. At one time Mona felt "sense of security" in Akbar Ahmad's (portrait) presence before marrying Salamat Ali. Even for Tanya and Amber the portrait symbolically presents Akbar Ahmad's presence among them and they keep it dear to their heart. Tanya was hurt when portrait was removed from its place and she hung it in her house later. For Mona Akbar Ahmad's gaze kept an eye not only on her but Salamat Ali too; "Akbar Ahmad looked at Salamat Ali with ill-disguised contempt" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 169). As his portrait acts as male gaze, it controlled movement of Mona in her familial and social circle. Even Hina felt that it is intruding in privacy of newly married couple and she made Mona realize that its presence is like "naked sword" on head of Salamat Ali (Farooqi, 2009, p. 124). "Surveillance induces in inmates a state of conscious" (Foucault, 1995, p. 201) which asserts psychological pressure on individuals. "Suddenly she caught a sight of Akbar Ahmad's portrait" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 66) is a refrain used in novel which throws light on conscious and oddly alert state of Mona.

The presence of unseen watcher in the form of the norms embedded in society, shape life of people as they follow them because they are set patterns accepted by society. For instance, Mona is a Middle age widow who faces disapproval from society in case of her second marriage. There are certain norms in society restricting females to remarry once their husband die which subjugate women as they are expected to follow norms rather than



pursuing their happiness, leading to deprivation of their basic right of taking decisions for themselves. Sajid Mir presenting a taboo associated with widowhood rejects the notion of Mona's second marriage and blackmails her that if she takes this step it would be a harsh blow on his reputation; "everyone who hears of it will spit on us"(Farooqi, 2009, p. 47). Another rigid norm surveilling lives of women spoken by Sajid Mir is "once the girls of our family are married they leave their house upon their death"(Farooqi, 2009, p.46). Not only the matter of marriage becomes troublesome for widows but the trivial matters of their lives including their way of spending and even the way of dressing themselves is monitored by society. For instance, Mrs. Kazi makes fun of Mona's dying her hair and her own daughter's gossip about Mona spending money carelessly and matter of her purchasing a car after second marriage becomes an issue.

The presence of external force or surveillance in form of memory is present in novel. The notion of memories keeping a guard and being watched keeps Mona restless and conscious of her acts; "suddenly Mona felt guilty for thinking of Salamat Ali in Akbar Ahmad's presence"(Farooqi 66). When Mona did not like Hina's act of secretly meeting Salamat Ali she remembers Akbar Ahmad's saying that Hina is "against her happiness" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 78). Mona at one point shuns the idea of learning driving by remembering that Akbar Ahmad had once discouraged her, similarly Tanya

and Mona both got hurt by the memory of Sari gifted by Akbar Ahmad.

There are several strategies which characters adopt to avoid Surveillance. They "resist" to power, "revolt" or "confess" under surveillance. Several times, Mona leaves the living room where she feels presence the most when the gaze becomes unbearable for her—"she does not wish to contend with Akbar Ahmad's silent remonstrations too, so she stayed well away from living room" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 70). Mona and Salamat Ali got married and revolted against surveillance of rigid norms of society associated with widowhood. No member of society is excluded of societal surveillance including the upholders of patriarchy. Salamat Ali also faced surveillance in the form of familial pressure for marrying a widow as revealed by Mona's thoughts—"while a widow who seeks a second marriage was looked down upon as a harlot in their society, widowers were expected to look for a virgin bride" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 106). For avoiding control and surveillance of men in her life, she firstly shifted her belongings in drawing room and later adopted the strategy of removing the portrait of Akbar Ahmad and divorcing Salamat Ali.

Making confessions is another behavioural response to surveillance. Mona confesses to her daughters about her suffocating relationship with their father in an emotional outburst caused by agitation and burden of surveillance. She says, "did your father ever tell me



he had money? No! ... Can you guess how I felt after learning that money was always there?...After thirty years of deception and betrayal, I'm sure he'd been able to continue living with himself' (Farooqi, 2009, P.163).

Another strategy to deal with or avoid psychological pressure in novel is repression and reasoning with one self. Mona continuously rationalizes consequences of her actions and reasons with her thoughts. Farooqi has skilfully provided an insight in her thoughts to present her psychological struggle. In case of Salamat Ali's early advances towards her by implanting roses in her garden through their gardener, Mona contemplates on her actions and realizes that she has gone against norms – "Mona reconsidered the circumstances and realized her mistake. She was a middle age widow not an adolescent girl...she should have spoken to him about rose bushes" (Farooqi, 2009, pp.14-15). She also suppresses her thoughts under control of norms. She tries to calm herself in the matter of her daughter's reaction on her marriage by suppressing the fact that she had spent her life with their father as a "stranger". She tries to silence the inner storm which has caused chaos in her due to behaviour of her daughter by reasoning that they are sensitive towards their father and they will be hurt if she tells them that they never had compatibility between them and how control freak as a husband he was.

In Bentham's "panopticon" for prisoners the system of surveillance was used to control their behaviour and

they behaved normally in order to avoid punishments (Foucault 200). In *The Story of a Widow* when Mona rebels against social norm of a middle age widow getting married, she bears punishment during the process and after it from members of family and society. However, like in Foucauldian "carceral culture" there was a new sort of punishment which is psychological, in form of fear rather than public execution, similarly Mona receives punishment in result of breaking norm (1995). She got psychological punishment in form of bitter comments and boycott from elders of her family represented by Sajid Mir and Aunt Aneesa. They emotionally punished her, "just tell her that if our family honor is sullied by her action, I'll renounce her as my niece and forbid her from even attending my funeral" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 48). Her relation with her daughters faced great turmoil in result of this rebellion against norms– "she could never have imagined that relationship with Tanya and Amber will become so complex out of a sudden" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 42). Not only she got punishment from society through treatment of Mrs. Kazi, aunt Aneesa, Sajid Mir and her daughter but from dead ones also. Akbar Ahmad's gaze asserted remorsefulness on her; "After the second anniversary of his death, Mona felt Akbar Ahmad watching her every moment, her every breath (Farooqi, 2009, p.169). Thus Mona received "punishment" in form of humiliation, emotional blackmail and constant surveillance of male chauvinism in form of Akbar Ahmad's gaze. .



The other main objective of research is to trace discovery of self and identity formation of Mona— the protagonist of novel. In “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, Althusser shows working of ideology and how it provides identity to members of society. According to Althusser, “all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects” (Althusser, 1971, p.173). Hence, individuals adopt the identity which society provides them. In *The Story of a Widow*, the males of society like Akbar Ahmad and Sajid Mir enjoy hegemony which patriarchy has established for men and females like Mona and Mrs. Baig are seen through patriarchal lens and treated as inferior “subjects”. Mona accepted the ideology of male dominance in marriage when she got married to Akbar Ahmad and lived as inferior “subject” but after his death her quest for individual identity is pertinent in novel.

“Ideology is a system of ideas and representation which dominate the mind of a man or social group” (Althusser, 1971, p. 158) and in novel the ideology of patriarchy and its norms are embedded in society which leads to subjugation of women as inferiors or less powerful than men. For instance, the ideology of widowhood hails all women whose husbands have died as subjects which are called “widows”. Hence, a set of expectations and norms is mapped for them which they are forced to accept. “Peculiarity of ideology is that it imposes” (Althusser, 1971, p.172) therefore, uncle Sajid and aunt Aneesa

representing the society and imposers of ideology of widowhood reminded Mona and warned her not to forget her position as a subject under ideology of widow. For example, when Sajid Mir gets to know about Mrs. Baig's proposition of Mona's second marriage, he reaches at her house and argues with her that it is unreasonable for her to take this step.

In order to enforce one ideology people then take aid of other ideologies which in this case are ideologies regarding honour and respect for women in society. In patriarchal world, honour of a woman is dependent on how successfully she confines to the norms of society. Sajid Mir threatens Mona that her decision of remarrying with her “advanced age” and “white hair” could harm reputation of their family— “what scandal it would create if someone got wind of this sordid affair?” (Farooqi 2009, p., 2 44) He strongly believes that respect of Mona is attached with name of her late husband and he becomes the decision maker here and decides that she “had an ideal man and ideal husband” and now she does not need anyone—“you don't want for anything now” (Farooqi, 2009, p. 44).

The hold of ideology is so strong that if anyone ponders to rebel against it he/she faces contempt from society. Mrs. Baig is another woman who is a widow and becomes victim of Sajid Mir's hostility for urging Mona to revolt against set norms; “Mrs. Baig was very sensible once but nerves and sanity don't last forever. What she's



done is unforgiveable” (Farooqi, 2009, p. 44).

“Ideology has material existence” (Althusser, 1971. P.165) and an “ideology talks of actions...actions inserted into practices...practices governed by rituals” (Althusser, 1971, p.168). Therefore, certain norms and traditions set patterns for ideologies to work and ideology manifests itself through conventional behaviours and rituals which are performed. One institution, ritual or practice of female inferior subjection is marriage of patriarchal society. For instance, it is a norm and practice that woman of middle age should not remarry otherwise family of that woman “might not be able to show [their] face anywhere” (Farooqi, 2009, p. 145). Another practice regarding ideology of marriage is that younger daughter should not get married before elder which bothered Mona for marriage of her daughters. The “impropriety of a widow marrying” (Farooqi, 2009, p. 55) is dominated norm in *The Story of a Widow*. The ideology of male domination is practiced through certain behaviours in marriage. Mona yearns for managing her expense herself but Akbar Ahmad never gave her autonomy of spending money on the basis of what he called “immediate necessities”(Farooqi, 2009, p. 6).

Individuals are hailed as subjects by ideologies and Mona is hailed as a wife, mother and widow and in this process of hailing she felt that her individuality is lacked behind therefore, she searches for individual

identity. Ideology “addresses” people and offer them identities which they own and are encouraged to accept. Mona accepted her subjection as a wife to Akbar Ahmad and her life revolved around him and his works when he was alive. Later when she became mother she was hailed as mother and wife only – “Mona's chief memories of thirty one years of married life concerned caring for her husband and running a busy household” (Farooqi, 2009, p.3). After Akbar Ahmad's death her subjection as wife changed to widow which she was expected to accept therefore she faced criticism when decided to remarry.

Individuals respond to hailing by internalization of norms associated to ideologies which hail them. This is interesting to observe in novel through the female characters. Males as dominant members accept their position willingly but women also tend to internalize the norms which are against them. For instance, Aunt Aneesa as a woman speak against the interest of another woman (Mona) – “she'll be ruin to our family!” (Farooqi, 2009, p. 47). Similarly she stands against Mrs. Baig for helping Mona to look out for her happiness; “Mrs. Baig had a screw loose” (Farooqi, 2009, p. 46). Tanya also remains unhappy with the decision of her mother's marriage and she herself feels pressure of norms therefore internalizes the norm of ideology which is against second marriage of middle age woman – “why didn't you say no to this man right away? Faraz will have to hear all kinds of things from his mother and family” (Farooqi, 2009, p.56). Mona is



underwhelmed by pressure of norms but tries to accept the reaction of her daughters on her marriage proposal.

Mona is also aware that women have to condition themselves according to ideologies in society; "She must represent the image of a mother, as well as that of a respectable widow. This later image repulsed her because it traditionally represented someone who deserved society's pity" (Farooqi, 2009, p.87). She contemplates how her daughter has internalized the norms associated with a wife. She realizes that Amber "too readily gave into her in-laws rather conservative interpretation of married woman's social independence" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 54) as she was not allowed to drive alone because her father in-law objected to it. Mrs. Kazi also asks Hina to discourage Mona in matter of second marriage—"you must discourage her, Hina, from throwing away the labor of her lifetime" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 81). Hence, ideologies are internalized by members of society even if they subjugate them. Therefore, in ideology of patriarchy, women also stand against other women when they internalize and accept such norms and contribute in their own dominated state.

Mona's journey of finding the identity and going against her position as a subject of only wife and mother started after death of Akbar Ahmad when she found time for herself and contemplated on her position in society. The notion that woman's life must revolve around her husband after marriage and she should find

contentment in that no matter what, hovered over Mona's life. Akbar Ahmad always looked for fulfilment of his desires without catering her needs—"as long as Akbar Ahmad's needs were addressed, her purpose in his life was fully served. He made no effort to know what she was thinking" (Farooqi, 2009, p.67).

Mona started finding her identity by doing the things which she liked. She initiated asserting her individuality by spending freely, reading books and gardening thus giving time to herself. She dealt with Aunt Aneesa's and Sajid Mir's conservative and dominating notions and interference in her life wisely by clearing that she is independent in taking her decisions. She realized that she has spent life of domination with Akbar Ahmad; "the more she pondered it, the more it appeared to her that she had two children with a stranger and now the stranger was gone"( Farooqi, 2009,p. 58) but now she wants to live on her own principles. She got married to Salamat Ali despite of familial and social pressure. Moreover she married to Salamat Ali on some conditions that suited her way of life. Later, she confronted her daughter courageously when she interfered in her economic matters: "you've inherited the same selfish streak of your father had. All my married life I suffered because of it! But now I won't take it" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 162).

After marrying Salamat Ali Mona felt that her husband is not accepted in her family whole heartedly,



she stood up for him. In Jafar's party, she realized that her family is mocking him so she asked his son in law to bring drink for him to assert that she would not compromise on disrespect for her husband. Later Salamat Ali slanders Noori for stealing Mona's jewellery but when Mona realizes that Salamat Ali has done it himself and put blame on her, she hires her back instead of Salamat Ali's emotional blackmailing. She gains confidence by making decisions in such matter and strengthens herself.

In divorce matter, she did not readily accepted what Jafar and Hina proposed as solution and decided to give Salamat Ali a chance. By the end of novel, she become so strong as an individual that she takes responsibility of her wrong decision of marrying a liar and herself pursues the process of divorce from him. After taking bold decision of divorcing her husband and facing social pressure without submitting she "began to feel a growing sense of freedom and as the days passed this feeling took root" (Farooqi, 2009, p.244).

For Althusser, ideology is eternal (p.161) and "inescapable". Mona's self assertion introduces new ideology of female liberation and self autonomy. Farooqi himself provides solutions for woman's subjugated state in society and by Mona's struggle. Her contented state at end of novel highlights the theme of women empowerment. In Discipline and Punish, Foucault states that "A real subjugation is born mechanically from

a fictitious relation" (Foucault, 1995, p. 202) and in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", Althusser asserts that "ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real state of existence" (Althusser, 1971, p.162). Both of the statements exert that if one struggles for his/her rights of individuality he/she can form his identity according to their will despite of conforming to unreal or forced notions which restrict humans. Farooqi presents self discovery of Mona and proves that with will power and determination, females can attain individuality and due status in society—"she had become accustomed to making decisions to suit her own priorities" (Farooqi, 2009, p. 247).

Mrs. Baig had lost her husband at same age as Mona had but Mrs Baig decided to not only work to attain self fulfilment from it but she also became devoted to do something productive for society. She chose to become a social worker and served people; "mainly on account of Mrs. Baig's efforts utility services were not frequently disrupted in their neighbourhood as in rest of the city" (Farooqi 9).

Farooqi has not only presented the problems of females in society but also provided solution by subtly portraying desirable traits in his characters. For instance, he has brought the attention of a reader that females in our society take more active part in bringing other females down than men (Aunt Aneesa and Mrs. Kazi) but at the same time he shows that if women



stand for each other against patriarchal oppression and become dependent themselves they can enjoy individual rights. Mrs. Baig supports Mona in her marriage decision— “do think carefully before you make a decision I want you to be happy” (Farooqi, 2009, p.32). Hina not only boosts her confidence for second marriage but stands by her through tough times of divorce process too. Therefore if women join hands together against discrimination which provides patriarchal system all authority to set a biased system for females, there will be greater chance of formation of new ideology which can help woman to choose for herself.

In portraying the struggle of women against conventional behaviour, Farooqi urges the males to change their chauvinistic notions and accept women as their equals. The untraditional trait of men helping in kitchen and supporting women of their family against rigid norm of remarrying and taking divorce( if married relationship is suffocating), is author's effort of calling for change which can provide sense of support and security to females. In a family gathering “Salamat Ali left the room for a few moments to help Jafar load up the tea trolley in kitchen” (Farooqi, 2009, p. 103), whereas in patriarchal society and according to rules of gender role, kitchen chores are responsibility of women.

Farooqi motivates such unconventional behaviour if it can bring happiness and moderation in a married life of a couple, therefore, he

presents another unconventional but beautiful scene in novel in which Salamat Ali prepares breakfast for Mona and she really admires it. Salamat Ali encourages her to wear a sari of flamboyant colours if it pleases her and simple compliment of “you look beautiful” brings tears of happiness and gratitude in her eyes (Farooqi, 2009, p, 153). Author gives such tips to happy married life through such events which make women feel secure and know their worth. Jafar's support for Mona in her decisions is also Farooqi's way of showing that men should help lift women up from rigid social norms rather than pulling them down through male domination. Hence, Farooqi is encouraging both genders to break the circle of rigid conventional behaviour if it is giving space to both partners. It will create balance in gender roles and since moderation has great power it will set things right for those who feel subjugated (females).

The most pertinent solution of liberation from female subjugation is that one take initiative for one's own interests like Mona does in novel— “stop telling me what to do with my life”(Farooqi, 2009, p.200) says Mona and takes her independent decisions. Thus, Mona not only resists against societal surveillance but by standing for her rights rebels against dominated norms from patriarchal ideology. By doing so, she discovers her identity of free and independent individual having all rights of living her life on her own principles. Thereby, Mona raises her voice against stereotypical norms and ideologies which forced her to submit



to every demand of society whether it was in her favour or against her, she created an ideology for woman who is free to cater her own needs rather than conforming to conventional orthodox ideologies such as regarding ideology of widowhood.

Thus, concepts of Surveillance are applied on *The Story of a Widow* by equating it with social norms and traditions. Social norms work hand in hand with the ideologies which set the principles of any society. Interpellation of ideology offers and provides people their identity which establishes that ideologies and norms are dominating and controlling forces in a society. Often they create hegemonic system. This does not imply that man is completely helpless and should accept the rigidity of norms and ideologies and suffer in any form. After all, someone shares his/ her notions regarding something with others and later it is accepted by society to form a norm or ideology. Similarly, the ideology of widowhood, norms regarding second marriage of a middle age woman and even psyche regarding dominating role of a male in a marriage subjugated Mona in novel but at last she stood for her rights and raised her voice for individual freedom.

Farooqi through Mona's character establishes that ideologies and norms are all man-made therefore, can be altered. By giving Mona that right of forming her ideology of liberation of women from inflexible subjugated norms, he is hoping for birth of those norms and ideologies which

are for betterment of all members of society regardless of any borders and defining lines like caste, colour or sex.

### Conclusions

*The Story of a Widow* is a complete whole in which author offers information about problematic life of widows and how social forces assert their power on them. It is a package in which author binds culture, societal norms and their influence on life of characters, how an individual with her strengths and limitations strives to create an identity and individual's interaction and relation with society. This research has traced the problems of females and their status under societal surveillance and explored as well as established that it is possible to change one's position as a subject and create an identity in society. The instances are dug out which establish Farooqi as a supporter of women empowerment in all fields of life.

Conclusively, Farooqi is contributing in English literature by providing women their own voice. Although women are more prone to societal surveillance than men in the form of norms in form of male gaze and are in clutches of conservative patriarchal norms and traditions, but if they raise their voice against their subjugation by such ideologies as Mona does in novel, male (forced) gaze can be avoided. Women in this regard should help other women by supporting them against rigidity of social norms and ideologies which snatch their autonomy of taking decisions suiting



their own priorities. It is established through the research that Mona creates a space for herself in society thus, introduces new ideology of woman's own individuality and independence which is not necessarily dependent on any male relation or society's interference. This in a broader perspective can be considered Farooqi's effort as Pakistani author standing for self worth and individual rights.

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