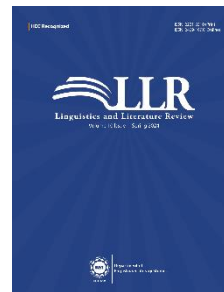
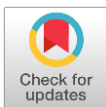



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Feudal Exploitation in Southern Punjab: Stylistic Analysis of the Short Story *in Other Rooms, Other Wonders* (2009) by Daniyal Mueenuddin

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Abstract

This research carries a stylistic analysis of the title short story in *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* (Mueenuddin, [2009](#)) through Leech and Short's ([2007](#)) model. Stylistics is a critical practice that analyses literary texts by using the methods and findings of the science of linguistics. The collection of eight stories by Daniyal Mueenuddin is widely acclaimed for depicting feudal traditions in southern Punjab. The interconnected stories portray exploitation, corruption of landlords and caving for money of the working class in feudalism. Vivid description of feudalism reflects a wide breach between the two classes. K. K. Harouni, an old retired civil servant and feudal lord, is an embodiment of an entitled man manipulating working-class women. This narrative reflects moral corruption and crooked methods of the working class to woo the landlord to gain financial benefits. This stylistic model is divided into four categories: lexical, grammatical, figures of speech, and context and cohesion. This study applied three categories: lexical, figures of speech, and cohesion and context to evaluate interconnected yet overlapping themes of feudalism and domestic exploitation. The data analysis shows that specific language tools have been applied in the text to transmit gender exploitation by the feudal landlord and corruption of the servant class. A valuable amount of hard data e.g. abundant presentation of feudal system related vocabulary, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and other language tools minutely reveals the latent aspects of feudalism. Despite the feudal lord's manipulation of the working class, the death of Harouni also shows their economic and financial insecurity. This study significantly will help to broaden the horizon of literary stylistics in recapitulating feudal system-related themes backed with hard data.

Keywords: corruption, Daniyal Mueenuddin, domestic, exploitation, feudalism, short story, stylistic

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Introduction

Short stories emerged as a distinctive genre in the last two decades of the previous century. Brander Matthews claims to be the first critic to distinguish it as a separate genre from the novel, and named it "Short-Story" (Guimaraes, 2009; Shapard & Thomas, 1986). Famous writers like Chekhov, Maupassant, and James Joyce etc. skillfully wrote short stories, a medium to present the intricacies of life. Short stories as a genre developed in Pakistan by Urdu writers such as Sadat Hassan Manto, Fehmida Riaz, etc., who depicted the social conditions of the time. Pakistani English literature has also produced well-reputed literature in this comparatively new genre to convey themes of social, political, gender, and domestic issues, etc., effectively. Mohsin Hamid, Aamer Hussain, Zulfiqar Ghose, Hanif Kureishi, Daniyal Mueenuddin, etc., are among the leading Pakistani English writers who contributed to the flourishing of this genre. Diaspora short story writers successfully explored diverse themes, including domestic violence, gender inequality, sexual exploitation, class differences, and corruption prevalent in the different strata of society, including both the aristocratic and lower working classes.

Feudalism has enjoyed its heyday in the past globally, but since the age of capitalism, it has lost its charm. Ray (2010) highlighted that, under the influence of the global market, "the rich upper class is still adapting to a new world that has no place for a feudalistic lifestyle" (p. 92). However, feudalism played a significant role in the history of the newly established state of Pakistan. Landlords in the history of Pakistan, especially in Sindh and southern Punjab, have had great influence in the government ruling circle as well as in the lives of the peasant class. Some writers like Tehmina Durrani, Salma Iftikhar, and Daniyal Mueenuddin are among a few who have contributed to this genre to highlight various shades of feudalism.

Daniyal Mueenuddin is a Pakistani-American lawyer, journalist, and fiction writer. The great-grandparents of Mueenuddin were also landlords; reminiscences of this system are still present in his family. His maiden short story collection, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* (Mueenuddin, 2009), was acclaimed as a great success, and won prestigious awards, including *the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award*, *O. Henry Award*, *the Commonwealth Writers' Prize*, *the Story Prize*, *the National Book Award*, and was a finalist for the *Pulitzer Prize*. Mueenuddin deserves to be placed in the company of the most canonised prose authors in the Western tradition. Sheela Reddy

rightly claimed that “his debut collection of ‘connected stories’, being ‘[sic]’ variously compared to Chekhov, Turgenev, Faulkner, and even, inexplicably, R. K. Narayan” (as cited in Mudure, [2021](#), para. 3).

In Other Rooms, Other Wonders ([2009](#)) includes eight short stories that explore the declining feudal tradition and the landowners’ exploitation of the servant class. The writer explained the Pakistani feudal culture of the 1980s and 1990s in these stories. Mueenuddin minutely crafted interconnected themes of women's oppression by feudal lords, corruption in the servant class, and decaying feudalism, as Hannan ([2009](#)) highlighted that the writer “keenly observes the subtleties of power” (p. 68). This collection of short stories delineated explicitly sexual and economic exploitation of women, and degradation of men working in the feudal system by the landlords. It also depicts the working class’s longing for wealth, desire for corruption, and the loss of moral values to gain financial benefits from the elite class. The working class never wastes a single opportunity to squeeze a mere penny or benefit from the landowners.

The title story, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, depicts the social status and superiority of the landlord and his family members. It also reflects their exploitation of the servant class. Daniyal Mueenuddin, in an interview with *Newsline Magazine*, indicated that his intention was not to target feudalism, he claimed “I don’t have a political agenda, and I am not trying to eliminate or support feudalism. But I believe that one has to enter the sensibility of the character and have empathy with it” (Mishra, 2019, para. 7). This story narrates the life events of K.K. Harouni, a retired civil servant, and his workers living in Lahore. *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* displayed typical character traits of the feudal bourgeoisie and the proletariat classes. The themes of the story revolve around Harouni and Husna, the landlord’s exploitation of a young girl due to his wealth and higher social status. Husna and other women also try to seduce the old man to get wealth. Corruption is widely practiced by the domestic servants in managing the farm and accounts. The male characters also humiliate and exploit other women workers in the house. Hai ([2014](#)) argues that “servants in this story become guardians of social and moral codes when they enact either resentment or servility towards the girl, whose transgressive sexual labour both lowers and elevates them in relation to her” (p. 38). The decay of the feudal system is also highlighted as his two daughters are living abroad, and the third is in Karachi, and the single old landlord, who was looking after the farm, also

died.

Stylistics, a rapidly growing genre in the academic circle, emphasizes textual interpretation by using the choices of language expressions in developing themes and creating desired effects. Widdowson (1975) places it between literary criticism and linguistics and claims it to be “... an area of mediation between two disciplines” (p. 4). Short (2018) exclaims that stylistics helps to develop connections between language and aesthetic function. Simpson (2004) sees its effectiveness and links with other branches of knowledge by asserting that “modern stylistics is positively flourishing, witnessed in a proliferation of sub-disciplines where stylistic methods are enriched and enabled by theories of discourse, culture, and society” (p. 2). Barry (2017) argues that “stylistics is a critical approach that uses the methods and findings of the science of linguistics in the analysis of literary texts” (p. 195). It analyses a text systematically, applying language tools. Stylistics emphasizes connections between literary and everyday language, specialized technical terms, and scientific objectivity. Stylistics provides hard data to support the themes, and establishes fundamental points of creating meanings and new interpretations by highlighting the refined linguistic tools (Barry, 2017).

Significance of the Study

The study applies Leech and Short’s (2007) model for literary and linguistic analysis of the selected short story. Proposed language choices play a significant role in establishing cultural, social, and class conflicts of decaying feudalism in southern Punjab. Stylistic analysis of *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* is helpful to locate various latent and taboo themes communicated through language choices that were otherwise difficult to present in Pakistani literature. Malik et al. (2015) find out that “a taboo theme” can be figured out “through mastery over the selection of words, images, symbols and structures” (p. 41). Hard data in this story plays significant role in determining feudalism-related themes.

Research Questions

- How do the language choices in *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* evince vivid description of feudalism in the title short story?
- How has the author unveiled the exploitation of women in the feudal system of southern Punjab through language tools of stylistics?

Research Methodology

Delimitation of Stylistic Model

This study is limited to the selected three elements of Leech and Short's (2007) model of stylistic analysis. The text's focus is to highlight the feudal system and the nature of the relationship between feudal lords and the servant class. This relation is effectively conveyed through the use of vocabulary, nouns, adjectives, adverbs and other lexical choices. Sentence structure and grammatical patterns are least effective in detecting these themes in this research; therefore, the grammatical aspect is not included in the data analysis.

Criteria for Selecting the Short Story

In Other Rooms, Other Wonders, the title short story is selected based on purposive sampling, from the 2009 edition of the interconnected eight short stories written by Daniyal Mueenuddin, for stylistic analysis. Other short stories narrate the life events of the servant class individually to show other shades of the feudal system. The focus of this study is to highlight the character traits of the feudal lord himself and his manipulative relationship with the servant class, as well as the mentality of the workers towards their employer. Therefore, the title story is selected for analysis.

Decoding Process

Figurative language and other artistic techniques are abundantly used to convey implicitly feudal system-related themes; therefore, manual detection of these elements is preferred over software to establish latent taboo themes. The decoding starts with meticulous close reading to identify themes related to feudalism, which is followed by the layered stylistics reading guided by three selected aspects from Leech and Short's (2007) model. The lexical level reading focuses on the choice of vocabulary, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and gerunds to show thematic development. The next reading is done for figures of speech, i.e., anaphora, parallelism, phonological schemes, simile, alliteration, and consonance, to identify their valuable role in constructing the feudal system minutely. Finally, the context and cohesion layered reading enhances the strong connection within the text and engaging readability. This layered reading significantly helped to detect the efficient use of language choices; shaping tone, narrative perspective, and thematic depth of the text to highlight feudalism.

Theoretical Framework

Leech and Short (2007) proposed a linguistic model of stylistics to identify language tools in a text. This model provides four broad categories; however, this study undertakes three selected categories.

Lexical Categories

A checklist of linguistic categories is heuristic because it enables areas of language as semantics that are incorporated in a text to identify the development of thematic patterns. Lexical categories identify the use of vocabulary that is a simple or complex, formal or colloquial, morphological or semantic. Nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs comprise the central focus of a text because they hold greater importance in concretizing the meanings of a discourse (Leech & Short, [2007](#), p. 61).

Figures of Speech

Figures of speech help to identify instances of foregrounding through lexical tools such as anaphora, repetition, and mirror-image patterns. The phonological scheme looks at sound and rhythm instances such as alliteration, assonance, etc., and tropes, which incorporate any deviation from the use of language in an unconventional way by departing from its understood rules to create special effects (Leech & Short, [2007](#), p. 63).

Cohesion and Context

Context and cohesion provide basic considerations for the internal and external organization of a text. Context reveals the way the writer addresses the reader, either directly or in the third person. Thoughts and feelings of the characters are presented in direct narration or indirect narration. Cohesion is the maintenance of logical or implicit connections between sentences (Leech & Short, [2007](#), p. 67).

Literature Review

Feudalism in Pakistan enjoys firmly established representation in the ruling elite of the state, having deep roots in the caste system and peasantry. Feudalism in Pakistan also accepted global, especially colonial influences, and incorporated local culture-based exploitation pretenses of controlling and managing lower-class workers at minimal wages. Amin and Gillani ([2023](#)) rightly indicated "two defining features of feudalism in Pakistan are the subordination of women and the mistreatment of the peasantry" (p. 225).

Mishra (2019) indicates that various themes of gender exploration of diasporic writings are widely indicated in contradiction and binary opposition, as in *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, "man vs. women, organism vs. oppression, rural vs. urban, elite vs. poor, and binaries in the gender dichotomy" have faithfully delineated this interwoven web of themes (para. 8). Ray (2010) also indicated that landowners and the elite class exploit poor people, especially women, to gain their vested interests, and also pointed out the way poor women took material advantage of the misdeeds of the rich landlords. "Women in Mueenuddin's stories use sex to their advantage, and men show themselves to be as adept in manipulation as the women, so Pakistani society can be safely concluded to be 'blemished'" (p. 90). To look into how the landowner gentry treats women, Arshad (2021) depicted the objectification of women *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* to "bring forward disparities and inequalities prevailing in the patriarchal society of Pakistan" (p. 49). He further indicates that "K. K. Harouni objectifies Husna and reduces her to the status of an object" (p. 56).

Manipulation of female domestic workers and exploitation of men responsible for maintaining large land farms is a stark reality of the feudal system. Yousaf et al. (2023) indicated that women are considered a source of oppression in feudalism by both the poor and the elite classes.

"Husna in *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* resigns herself to a life of few choices and ultimately succumbs to the patriarchal establishment. Her devastating outcome underscores the harsh truth many women confront when their resistance is hindered, leaving them seemingly trapped in an ongoing cycle of subjugation" (p. 11).

Tariq (2018) highlights the injustices of feudalism in Pakistani rural areas, its oppression and injustices that have been strongly insinuated in the sub-continent through English colonialism, where the bourgeoisie exploit the proletariat class. Suppression of lower classes for economic advantage is a symbol of feudalism. Naveed et al. (2023) argue that the short stories "illustrate a stark reality where landlords and industrialists oppress the lower classes for their own gain and pleasure" (p. 594), and the poor classes "are being exploited, humiliated, and suppressed by the bourgeoisie" (p. 600).

Hai (2014) explored *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* (2009) as an example of transnational fiction that "foregrounds the figure of the domestic

servant as central rather than marginal and emphasizes diverse servants' vulnerability and agency" (p. 33). The research views the servant class, often ignored by the elite class, and their presence is only noticed through their absence. Sexual exploitation of women is a less explored theme in Pakistani society, and becomes a difficult task for the writers to narrate explicitly. Stylistics is a better choice to identify these themes with the evidence of hard data.

Butt et al. (2018) applied the transitivity model of Halliday to the two short stories '*In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*' and '*About a Burning Girl*' by Mueenuddin. Transitivity refers to the relationship of a verb with a noun phrase in a clause (p. 201). The transitivity model uses lexico-grammatical tools based on six processes, including relational, material, verbal, mental, existential, and behavioral. This study identifies Marxist themes such as class difference, corruption, and commodification, as well as Marxist-feminist notions of women's exploitation. This research shows that applying transitivity forms a kaleidoscopic image of the Pakistani developing society, still in the clutches of the elite, exploiting the working class. The proletariat and the bourgeoisie's classes of characters describe their traits vividly in these narrations. Tabassam et al. (2023) applied the Leech and Short (2007) model to Bapsi Sidhwa's short story collection *Their Language of Love* (2013). This qualitative study uses excerpts through purposive sampling to see various stylistic devices and their role in developing themes.

Sheikh et al. (2019) investigated the valid and persuasive use of male authors' vocabulary to back up this genre to transmit the desired themes in two selected stories from *In Other Room, Other Wonders* by Mueenuddin and *And the World Changes: Contemporary Stories by Pakistani Women* edited by Muneeza Shamsie by applying Mills theory of feministic stylistics presented in *Feminist Stylistics* (1995) and *Language and Sexism* (2008). This study is limited to the lexical level of this stylistic model. It also tries to find the difference between male and female writers in how they present women, and argues that male writers mostly present women as inferior. Sheikh et al. (2019) highlight exploitation of women in Pakistani culture as "It is demonstrated that males in Pakistan mostly consider and treat females as inferior and other. Males are mostly more sexist in their representation of the opposite sex as compared to females" (p. 25).

Research Gap

A critical review of the existing literature on the selected short story explored themes about women and proletariat class exploitation through Marxist, feminist, and postcolonial perspectives; however, Leech and Short's (2007) model has not been applied so far to the selected short story to establish feudalism and its related themes. This research endeavors to highlight the missing points in earlier research by providing evidence of language choices in the text to establish these themes.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The title of the story, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, has characteristics of parallelism that create contrastive meanings. ‘*Other Rooms*’ refers to the unnamed geographical location, to reflect an unlawful place or tribal system that may not be governed by the central state. ‘*Other Wonders*’ might convey implicitly the unexplored or taboo themes to indicate the complexity of the hidden secrets of feudalism. The short story is analyzed by applying lexical categories, figures of speech, and cohesion and context aspects outlined in Leech and Short's (2007) model.

Lexical Categories

Lexical choices in this short story include vocabulary, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and gerunds to analyze the peculiar use of language tools to develop and describe various shades of feudalism. The writer expertly creates wonderful lexical items to reflect the culture of landlords and the way feudalism works with all its shortcomings. Hard lexical choices enable readers to understand the crux of feudalism in Southern Punjab, Pakistan.

Table 1

Data Evaluated under Lexical Categories

| Category | Type | Data |
|------------|-------------|--|
| Vocabulary | Urdu words | <i>Dupatta, Purda, Tongas, Hajj, Kurta, Pyjamas, Mian sahib, Shah sahib, Jenazah, Shalvar, Begum sahiba</i> |
| | Elite class | Lahore house, civil servant, butler, maidservant, large Chinese painting, kerosene for fire, chauffeur, butler, cook, maidservant, bougainvillea, jasmine, Sun King Versailles |

| Category | Type | Data |
|--------------|----------------------------|--|
| Proper Nouns | Agriculture | landlord, tree, grass, sky, kite, vultures, old tree, pupil, |
| | Sensual | young, miss, living room, handsome golden face, fatherly kiss on her cheek, hello girl, Husna, virgin, virginity, ripe fruit, encounter, hello, darling |
| | Expensive elements | Sofas, expensive soaps, hairdressers, masseuses, idleness, richness, sleekness, voluptuousness |
| | Kitchen items | green tea, table, plate, cheese, soufflé, biscuits, tea, kitchen, garlic, curry, ice, salt, pepper |
| | Names of the elite class | K. K. Harouni, Begum Harouni, Mr. Harouni, K. K., Riffat Begum, retired Army General Karim, retired General Hidayatullah. |
| | Names of the servant class | Samandar Khan, Chacha Latif, boy, butler, accountant, driver, Chauffeur. |
| | Historical places | Chinese, Lahore Old City, Liberty Market, State Bank, Eiffel Tower, Union of Punjabi, Paris, Kashmir, Model Town, Danepur, Aitchison, India, Punjab, Hindu Kush, Khyber, Karachi, Sickh Wars, Chinese Swords, and Hindu Gods |
| | Adjectives | golden face, pinkish kurta, brightly dressed companion, brightly glossy colour, brown suitcase, pigeon-blood-ruby, Pinky's daughter, and grey eyes |
| | Adverbs | Brightly, glossy, certainly, very slightly, friendly, heavily |
| | Gerunds | Inwardly, suddenly, barely, abruptly placing, lengthening, wearing, seeing, draining, letting, hesitating, snarling, finishing, lying, knowing, reaching, quickening, cleaning, landing, splashing, and understanding |

Vocabulary

Vocabulary pertinently reflects feudalism and its various shades by using Urdu words to show Pakistani culture adequately. Urdu words are used to represent settings based in the cultural context of the Islamic country Pakistan. They include *dupatta, purdah, tongas, hajj, kurta, pyjamas, Mian Sahib, Shah Sahib, jenazah, shalvar, begum sahiba*, etc., which outwardly describe it. Some Urdu vocabulary is given in regular font, but a few words are used in italics unconventionally to increase focus, such as *dupaata, purda, tongas, hajj, and kurta*. Agricultural vocabulary provides hard data to establish the role of natural and land scenes in feudalism, such as landlord, tree, grass, sky, kite, vultures, old tree, pupil, etc. This short story employed abundant vocabulary to establish the luxurious lifestyle of the elite class such as Lahore house, civil servant, butler, maidservant, large Chinese painting, kerosene for fire, chauffeur, butler, cook, maidservant, bougainvillaea, jasmine, Sun King Versailles, etc. All these clearly reflect the amalgam of aristocratic domestic household containing a servant class to keep each thing tidy.

Another set of vocabulary firmly establishes the sexual adventures of the old feudal lord and provides extensive hard data to justify the theme of implicitly presented manipulation of a lower-middle-class young girl, Husna. Vocabulary describing Husna through: young, miss, living room, handsome golden face, fatherly kiss on her cheek, hello girl, Husna, virgin, virginity, ripe fruit, encounter, hello, darling, etc., carries significant links to prove her objectification and manipulation. Vocabulary is used pertinently to narrate the character traits of K. K. Harouni's daughter Sarwat, who is described as a highly modernized, rich lady when she visits her father. The list of expensive elements includes sofas, expensive soaps, hairdressers, masseuses, idleness, richness, sleekness, voluptuousness, etc. This story also contains a set of domestic and kitchen items that guide the reader to a certain understanding of the setting of the story, such as green tea, table, plate, cheese soufflé, biscuits, tea, kitchen, garlic, curry, ice, salt, and pepper, in a household of the elite class.

Proper Nouns

Nouns in this story play a significant role in creating a wide gap between the higher and lower classes. It also provides a thorough glimpse into the geographical and historical relevance and colonial history of the region and

its strong affinities with feudalists. Proper nouns aptly portray the peculiar context of the story to reflect elite and servant class differences. K. K. Harouni, Begum Harouni, Mr. Harouni, K. K., and Riffat Begum constitute the elite class. Begum, retired Army General Karim, and retired General Hidayatullah. K. K. Begum, Mr. Retired Army General, and General Retired use titles, abbreviations, and ranks to show the higher status of the elite class. These attributes are prevalent in Pakistani society, reflecting authority in the household, farm, agricultural lands, or army. Names of the lower and working class are presented casually to symbolize their work, as Husna is the name of the lower-middle-class girl, which means beautiful, and symbolizes sensual relevance to the old landlord. The working class is presented with nouns peculiar to reflect the culture of distinctive traits of the servant class, such as Samandar Khan and Chacha Latif. Some servants are given common nouns such as boy, butler, accountant, driver, and chauffeur, which deny voice and respect to the servant class, as well as show how their usefulness to the elite class is only for their services rather than through their own self.

Proper nouns of historical places and cities reflect the geographical, historical, and colonial past of Southern Punjab, such as Chinese, Lahore Old City, Liberty Market, State Bank, Eiffel Tower, Union of Punjabi, Paris, Kashmir, Model Town, Danapur, Aitchison, India, Punjab, Hindu Kush, Khyber, Karachi, Sickh Wars, Chinese Swords, and Hindu Gods, typically stated hard data to establish the golden past of feudalism. These proper nouns of renowned places and events establish grounds to develop the old tradition of the landlords and their influences at the higher governmental level, not only within Pakistan, but also their links were established with former colonizers.

Adjectives

Adjectives in this story are provided abundantly in this text, particularly for the landlord family to show their higher status. A golden face, pinkish kurta, brightly dressed companion, brightly glossy color, brown suitcase, pigeon-blood-ruby, pinky's daughter, and grey eyes are furnished to describe the lavish style of Harouni's daughters, as well as the expensive use of items by the feudal landowner. It clearly shows a wide gap between the elite and the servant class.

Adverbs

Adverbs are descriptively used to stress the higher wealth status of landowners and the pathetic situation of the poor servant class. Adverbs, i.e., brightly dressed companions, brightly glossy colour, certainly very expensive, very slightly smacking, friendly yellow light, and heavily carpeted dining rooms, are vivid examples of the extraordinary and lavish lifestyle of the elite class. The servant class is presented with vocabulary that depicts their weakness, as ‘inwardly and suddenly to feel vulnerable “barely spoke Punjabi”, and abruptly she stood up’ (p. 112). Husna was described in an insulting manner and considered a lesser human being. The writer used adverbs aptly to create a visible difference and a wider gap between the two classes.

Gerunds

A gerund is a part of a verb used as a noun ending in -ing form. It has the force of a noun as well as the action of a verb. Gerunds are used extensively in this story. Many paragraphs start with gerunds, i.e., placing, lengthening, wearing, seeing, draining, letting, hesitating, snarling, finishing, lying, knowing, reaching, quickening, cleaning, landing, splashing, and understanding. Continuous form is preferred throughout the story as a tool to give rhythm and swiftness to the events of the story. The exhaustive use of gerunds implicitly indicates that the significance of action is more important than the name of its worker in the feudal system.

Figures of Speech

Table 2

Data Evaluated under the Figure of Speech

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Anaphora | "You took care of him in these past months, and you were rewarded. You're young; you'll find other things. You think that you'll never heal." (P. 136). "I should have said, 'I came with nothing, I leave with nothing. I leave with the clothes on my back. I served your father'" (P. 137). 'naughty, naughty' |
| Parallelism | "I came with nothing, I leave with nothing" (P. 137). "Even the servants here treat me as if I'm nothing. You are important people, and I'm nothing, and my family is nothing" (P. 137) |

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| | “She had always inhabited an indefinite space, neither rich nor poor, neither servant nor begum” (p. 117). |
| | “liberal splash of kerosene oil to ignite flame” (p. 126) |
| Phonological schemes | “splashing of water when Husna jumps over a puddle” (P. 127) |
| | ‘two-stroke engine crackling’ |
| | ‘typewriter clicking’ |
| | ‘creaking of doors’ |
| Simile | “as measured and as concentric as that of the Sun King at Versailles” (p. 131). |
| | ‘like a frog in the corner’ |
| | ‘little lacquered fingers a letter’, |
| | ‘from face to face’, |
| | ‘sinking, the skin’ |
| Alliteration | ‘without windows, the walls’ |
| | ‘Hello, Husna, he said’ |
| | ‘illuminating a cemented swimmin’ |
| | “washermen, drivers, sweepers, household servants” (p. 119). |
| | ‘after a quarter of an hour’ (p. 107). |
| Consonance | ‘puddled, he stopped and amused’ |
| | ‘showed her head’ |
| | ‘neither rich nor poor, neither servant nor begum’ (p. 117). |

Anaphora

Anaphora is a formal device that repeats pronouns at the beginning of each successive clause. Its function is to persuade a certain aspect of a text. Anaphora ‘you’ refers back to the pronoun for emphasis. Mueenuddin (2009): “You took care of him in these past months, and you were rewarded. You’re young; you’ll find other things. You think that you’ll never heal (p. 136)”. After Harouni’s death, his daughter taunted Husna to leave the house abruptly. This shows how the elite class uses the servant class and disowns them after the completion of work. ‘You’ is referred back to emphasize her small and lowest status for the other members of the landlord family. Another example of anaphora is the referring back of the personal pronoun ‘I’ by Husna at the beginning of successive clauses, as Mueenuddin (2009) narrates “I should have said, ‘I came with nothing, I leave with nothing. I leave with the clothes on my back. I served your father” (p. 137). Husna protested by repeating her pronoun in front of landlord’s daughters. It shows her frustration and the indifference of the landlady. The death of Harouni reflects the decline of feudalism and the younger generation’s idealization of Western culture and lifestyle. It also reflects a severe blow to the army

of workers who were in danger of losing their jobs.

Parallelism

Parallelism creates special effects on readability and conveying implicit meanings. The writer applied parallelism at the word level as ‘naughty, naughty’ and clause level as “I came with nothing, I leave with nothing” (p. 137). This parallelism serves the function of highlighting the inferior and humble situation of Husna. Mueenuddin (2009) describes again, "Even the servants here treat me as if I'm nothing. You are important people, and I'm nothing, and my family is nothing" (p. 137). Again, Mueenuddin (2009) rightly indicated the different status of Husna as “She had always inhabited an indefinite space, neither rich nor poor, neither servant nor begum” (p. 117). The writer effectively used parallelism to convey contrasting situations in a single clause or sentence to convey sensitive issues.

Phonological Schemes

The short story created special sound effects helpful in the development of themes central to the narrative. Mueenuddin (2009) applied an onomatopoeic language tool to create special sound effects as “servant came in with an armful of wood, threw it with a crash into the fireplace, then took a bottle of kerosene and poured a liberal splash” (p. 109). Another instance is when Husna was accompanying an old landlord for his walk in the garden “landing just at the edge and splashing” (p. 112) and “splashing of water when Husna jumps over a puddle” (p. 127). The writer used this sound imagery to reflect the status of the poor class through old machinery, as ‘two-stroke engine crackling’ and ‘typewriter clicking’ reflect the monotonous and humble lifestyle of the lower classes. Hence, ‘creaking of doors’ is another onomatopoeic device that reflects the decaying feudalism where everything in the household is as old as Harouni himself. This short story is fertile in the use of this device to convey taboo themes in simple and lucid prose.

Simile

Simile is a figure of speech that links two different things to draw similar attributes, mostly using ‘like’ or ‘as’, and this story uses it effectively to convey deeper meanings. Mueenuddin (2009): “he [K. K.] lived in a world as measured and as concentric as that of the Sun King at Versailles” (p. 118). The writer compares him with the monarch Louis XIV, who ruled France from 1643 to 1715 for 72 years. Similarly, Harouni also understood

the monarch for his long rule over this house. The text accurately employs similes, which enrich the aptness of the theme as the writer presents a giant status of feudal lords. Lower status of Husna is visible in the simile 'like a frog in the corner' (p. 125), in the presence of other family members of the land owners, to indicate the insignificance of the servant class. These devices heightened the effects of this prose to get the attention of the reader to perceive the desired effects.

Alliteration

Alliteration is the use of the same consonant sound at the beginning of words. It is mostly used in texts to create aesthetic and melodious effects. The writer used it frequently in this story to achieve thematic intensity and increase melodious effects. This text is constructed with alliterations such as 'little lacquered fingers a letter', 'from face to face', 'sinking, the skin', 'without windows, the walls', 'Hello, Husna, he said', 'illuminating a cemented swimming', and "washermen, drivers, sweepers, household servants" (p. 119). Mueenuddin applied alliterative phrases as poetic devices profusely to achieve vivid descriptions and repetitions of consonant sounds. He uses this device to capture vivid imagery, as "little lacquered fingers a letter" presents two possible functions. The first is to capture the attention of the reader by providing an aesthetic sense, and secondly, it reveals Husna's lesser value and treats her as an object.

Consonance

Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds in a verse or sentence. It appears at the beginning, end, or may be in the middle of a word. Tabassam et al. (2023) indicated that "writers used consonance to adorn and embellish their data. It is also used by writers to make their text sound more alluring than that of simple writing" (p. 170). Contemporary writers are mostly creative writing qualified from international universities, which makes their narratives an embodiment of the fertile use of language devices. The text contains sound effects frequently, such as 'after a quarter of an hour', 'puddled, he stopped and amused', 'opened the door, showed her head', 'neither rich nor poor, neither servant nor begum' (p. 116). Although repetition of consonants does not directly influence the development of themes of the story, however, consonance creates a rhythmic and melodious effect for its readers while developing themes pertinently.

Cohesion and Context

Table 3

Data Evaluated in Cohesion and Context

| |
|--|
| virgin, little, poor, thing, maidservant, companion, petitioner, Husna young miss, young girl, a figure, a girl at twenty, young lady, like cat, poor thing, little one. |
|--|

Cohesion is the logical link between sentences with the help of cross-references of pronouns, repetition of words, and implicit connection of meanings. Husna is referred to by different nouns by the writer and other characters as: virgin, little, poor, thing, maidservant, companion, petitioner, young miss, young girl, a figure, a girl at twenty, young lady, like cat, poor thing, and little one. The higher frequency of her presentation provides hard data to determine the themes of sexual exploitation, class difference, gender inequality, and objectification of women as sexual tools. Mueenuddin (2009) describes Husna in the following words: “the irregularity of her features, her straight, dry hair, her small mouth, all caused her to cringe inwardly and suddenly feel vulnerable, to feel the stupidity of a few remembered comments that escaped her that evening. She felt the immensity of her encounter with K. K. Harouni” (p. 115-6). The author referred back to Husna as ‘her’ five times in a single sentence and the personal pronouns ‘she’ and ‘her’ enhance compactness in the sentences. The writer provided various clues about the context of this story through language tools.

Conclusion

The analysis of the short story has highlighted salient features of the three categories proposed in Leech and Short's (2007) model of stylistic analysis. The vocabulary of the short story is pertinent to strongly convey feudalism-related themes. Urdu words are effectively used to convey the Islamic cultural setting in Pakistan. Proper nouns are used more frequently than abstract nouns to provide a geographical location and the shades of feudal system. The categorization of proper nouns reflects class differences, where the elite class is identified with the nouns showing their prestigious social position and the servant class is given lower-status words or even indicated through their professions. Adjectives of quality and manner for landowners are highly optimistic and exaggerated to maintain their superiority, but the

lower class is constructed with negative and general adjectives. Most of the times, verbs are used in the continuous tense to show progressive work status and increase fluency. Exclamation marks are used to express a feeling of emotional intensity. Figures of speech convey implicit meanings in the text to explore sexual taboos of feudalism. Similes concentrate the elite class's attitude towards the lower classes. Phonological expressions such as alliteration and consonance express deeper insight beyond superficial meanings. Anaphora and parallelism increase connections and structure between the clauses and sentences. Cohesion is observed by the abundant repetition of personal pronouns referring back in different forms. Stylistic categories of lexical choices, figures of speech, and cohesion and context elucidate the foregrounded traits of the feudal system. Stylistics is an authentic lens to convey themes of sexual exploitation, patriarchy, gender discrimination, class differences, and the decaying feudal system with hard data evidences.

Author Contribution

Muhammad Ramzan: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, methodology, writing - original draft, writing - review & editing. **Waseem Hassan Malik:** supervision, validation, writing - review & editing.

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