

NATURE'S TAPESTRY: ECO-FEMINIST THREADS IN JAMIL AHMAD'S *THE WANDERING FALCON*

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Abstract

Jamil Ahmad's The Wandering Falcon through an ecofeminist lens, focuses on the interconnectedness between the oppression of women and the suppression of nature. Ecofeminism focuses on the exploitation of women in relation to nature and shows how the oppression of both is legitimized by the patriarchy. It sheds light on the domination of the weaker sex by providing various instances from the interconnected stories of the novel set in the background of peripheries near the borders of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. It delves into tribal culture and the ways through which culture subjugates and overpowers women—the representative of nature—like honour killing, commodification, exploitation, slavery, violence and prostitution. Jamil Ahmad highlights how men are the representatives of culture with patriarchal tools like Pashtunwali code in this case, aiding in defending the wrongful domination by the bearers of culture over the feeble representatives of nature—the women. Throughout the novel, various examples of the nature-culture dichotomy are evident. This paper dives deep in to the exploration of the patriarchal structures ingrained in the society which serve to oppress women side by side with nature.

Key Words: Ecofeminism, Women, Nature, Men, Culture

Introduction

Jamil Ahmad, an English novelist, was born in Jalandhar, Punjab in 1933. He was also a short story writer known for his literary debut *The Wandering Falcon* published in 2011. As a Pakistani civil servant, he served in different uncharted territories like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Before working as a commissioner in Dera Ismail Khan and Swat, he served as a political representative in Quetta, Chaghi, Khyber and Malakand. Before and during the Soviet Invasion, at a critical time in 1979, he was appointed as an ambassador in the Pakistan embassy in Kabul. He also served as the chairman for Tribal Development Corporation. His last post in the government was as Chief Secretary of Balochistan. Ahmad worked for over two decades among the nomad communities who live in one of the world's harshest and most sensitive cross-border regions. The experiences the writer had in these tribal regions helped him in his writing which highlighted the lives of the tribal people.

The Wandering Falcon is a slackly woven collection of nine stories depicting the interior view of the tribal culture of Pakistan. Throughout all the stories, Ahmad sheds light on the intriguing attitudes and taboos of the tribes, their age-old customs and traditions and their strictly held codes of honour.

Near the borders of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, there is a military post. This is where the story of Tor Baz, the wandering falcon begins. Two wanderers come to this place, a man and a woman seeking refuge. The story begins in Balochistan in the early 1950s, when two lovers from one of the tribes of Balochistan called Siahpada elope and arrive at the desolated fort. The woman, the daughter of a tribal chief, previously married to an impotent man decides to elope with her father's servant whom she fell in love with. The couple starts to live in one of the deserted parts of the fort. A baby boy is born raised in one of the hidden corners of the

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fort, until one day, Siahpad sends men in pursuit of them. The couple try to escape along with their son but their effort goes in vain. The tribal chief captures them and kills both the husband and the wife leaving the child alone in the desert. The little one, Tor Baz is left to die and is adopted by Baloch rebels. From here onwards, his journey of wandering begins. Tor Baz grows up to become a person with no fixed identity and place.

One of the stories, 'A Point of Honour', shows a group of Baloch rebels who took Tor Baz under their care when he was six years old after his parents' gruesome murder. The boy starts living with the rebels. Unfortunately, all of them are sentenced to death because of the unsuccessful talks between the government and the Baloch rebels.

In one of the most moving stories, 'The Death of Camels', Ahmad narrates the incident of a tribe that herds cattle and move them from the hills of Afghanistan to the plains of Pakistan. This process of moving flocks from one place to another went on smoothly until the government of Pakistan imposed restrictions. They are not allowed to cross the borders without valid documents. This restriction brings a lot of difficulties along with it. They decide to pass through because there is no other way. One of the women, named Gul Jana decides to move forward by placing a copy of the Quran over her head, assured the holy book would save her, but all the men, women and children are killed by the firing of the soldiers.

All the nine stories written follow the fortune of the wandering falcon, Tor Baz, who travels between the Pakistani and Afghan tribes and their ambiguous worlds. He journeys through uncharted territories observing the hardships of various tribal villagers like the Afridis, Balochs, Bhattanis, Brahuis, Dotanis, Gujjars, Kharots, Mehsuds and Wazirs. Tor Baz makes an appearance in every story of the novel, but he only acts as a discreet observer. While roaming about in the tribal villages, Tor Baz comes across a variety of characters, each portraying a different story. He even witnesses women being sold into prostitution at the slave market. Moreover, he observes the abduction of teachers and abandonment of minors. When a District Commissioner inquires about his identity, Tor Baz states, "Think of Tor Baz as your hunting falcon" (Ahmad, 2011, p. 94).

The Wandering Falcon is not only about tribes but also about fidelity, affections, dignity, adherence to traditions, borders both geographical and personal, and political and social issues.

Literature Review

Jamil Ahmad's (2011) *The Wandering Falcon* has been interpreted by researchers from different perspectives. It has been discussed from the perspective of ecocriticism, Althusserian view, feminism, political and historical context and modernism.

Afzal (2020) examines the literary work *The Wandering Falcon* authored by Jamil Ahmad through the lens of ecocriticism. Ahmed's book depicts the tribal areas of Pakistan as the initial human settlement. The novel vividly portrays the harsh Balochistan terrain through the classical elements, showcasing the struggle between the natural and human realms. Tor Baz represents this conflict. He tries to find a way to balance conflict and conservation. The novel envisions a feasible post-conflict framework through an ecocritical lens while challenging myths of violence and atrocities associated with tribal regions.

Mugheri, Khanda, Bakhsh and Ali (2020) delve into the impact of international borders on tribal clans and their cultural dynamics, using Jamil Ahmed's *The Wandering Falcon* as an analytical tool. The focus is on how borders, shaped by international agreements, constitutions, and regulations, contribute to the loss of individualism and cultural identity.

The specific case of Pakistan, surrounded by borders, especially in Baluchistan connecting to Afghanistan, is examined in light of its political stance against state terrorism. The research questions whether conflicts arising from these borders affect the natives more than they serve to defend the state from external threats. The study attempts to explore the influence of territorial borders with a realistic social narrative within ethnic tribes undergoing cultural transitions.

Qasim, Iftikhar, and Qasim (2021) explore Jamil Ahmad's novel *The Wandering Falcon* from a feminist perspective, analysing the representation of women and behaviour towards them in the patriarchal society of the tribal areas of Pakistan. As presented in *The Second Sex*, the study employs De-Beauvoir's feministic philosophical approach, to uncover the hidden realities and oppression faced by women in the novel. The research aims to examine how women are dominated and suppressed in the novel by the patriarchy as a means of transmitting traditional practices. The novel portrays women as deprived of their rights, treated as commodities, and facing domestic violence, sexual objectification, and extrajudicial killings.

Iqbal, Bukhari and Khalid (2023) cross-examine the manipulation of people residing in tribal areas through ideological state apparatus keeping in view *The Wandering Falcon* by Jamil Ahmad. They show the role of media, education, religious, armed forces in fulfilling the state agenda by exploiting the Baloch people. Their research focuses on highlighting the subjugation of the tribal proletariats at the hands of the state and its ideological tools. They shed light on how media serves to impose the ideology of the state, how religion works in the favour of the state by promising rewards in the hereafter for bearing hardships and staying silent over the wrongdoings of the powerful in this temporary world and how education institutions inculcate the narrative of the state in the masses by making them realize their inferior status compared to the influential people.

Sarikaya (2023) in her dissertation dives into the ecofeminist perspective in the play *The Lady from the Sea* (1888) written by Henrik Ibsen. Ecofeminism, emerging from a concern for the parallel subjugation of women and nature, gained prominence in the late 20th century. The study draws parallels between Ellida's patriarchal domination in her marriage and the brutal abuse of nature, emphasizing how both issues are intertwined. Through an ecofeminist lens, the sea in the play becomes a symbolic force governing lives and highlighting the consequences of human misconceptions and consumerist attitudes toward nature. Its analysis aims to provide a deeper understanding of how *The Lady from the Sea* weaves together gender issues and environmental degradation as interconnected challenges.

This novel has not been interpreted from the perspective of ecofeminism. The researcher will focus on *The Wandering Falcon* by Jamil Ahmad in the light of ecofeminism exploring the root cause of the domination of women and the exploitation of nature by the patriarchal culture and this study will provide a base for the other writers to further work upon.

Discussion

Jamil Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon* represents miseries of women. He depicts a society in which the culture dominates nature by establishing strict rules in the form of patriarchal social code of conduct like the Pashtunwali code which aims to justify the oppression of the women lot at the hands of men. It explores how patriarchy draws similarities between nature and women to subjugate and exploit the females as well as the environment.

You are right. My body has been violated, but think of one thing. My body has been fashioned by nature for this very purpose. What was done to me was indeed wrong, but truly speaking. It is, as it were, only what nature had intended for me when it created me (Ahmad, 2011, p. 100).

For centuries, there has persisted this unsaid rule that men are the bearers of culture being the head of their families while women are the representatives of nature. Women are associated with nature due to their physical makeup and the societal or gender roles imposed upon them. Due to this stereotypical narrative, men are the promoters of culture and women are the representative of nature, there is a line demarcated between the two genders which has created a binary in which one gender has become superior while the other with its wild nature has been considered inferior. "And it is stated that if women were not meant to be dominated by men, they would not have been created weaker" (Griffin, 2016, p. 29). On this basis, the superior sex dominates and subjugates the weaker, inferior sex. This repetitive pattern has been followed since the beginning of civilization.

While women have not really held a place of importance in the past, but the association of women with nature has a long history. This connection can be seen in the ancient mythology where many goddesses can be seen embodying the aspects of mother earth such as Persephone and her mother Demeter who are both the representatives of the powerful forces of nature. However, with the advent of industrialization, the creation of women's bodies began to be looked down upon as wild, untamed and perishable while the creations by men seeing their eternal state of being and their civilized makeup created a rift in the society in which one became authoritative over the other.

With the exploitation of nature and misuse of its resources, the same began to be done with the women by identifying both with each other. Men became the self while women became the other, men were the persona while women were their shadow, men were considered the super ego while women were considered the id, men were recognized as the master while women as their slave, men were identified as the colonizer, women as the colonized and men became like the bourgeoisie while women became the proletariat.

Tying the exploitation of nature to the oppression of women, Ynestra King (1989) remarks,

In this way, nature became "other," something essentially different from the dominant, to be objectified and subordinated. Women, who are identified with nature, have been similarly objectified and subordinated in patriarchal society. Women and nature, in this sense, are the original "others" (p.21).

Here, one can see how women are considered the 'other' due to their close ties with nature biologically. This interconnected relation highlights how it becomes justifiable for men to violate women by assimilating both the beings considered to be inferior by men— nature and women.

The domination of patriarchy over nature has been evident for centuries and so has its oppression of women ensued likewise. Throughout the ages, the oppression and domination of both nature and women has been carried on by the patriarchy; men have always deemed themselves as the sole controllers of whatever is weaker than them be it nature or women. This wrongful domination and suppression of the weaker ones has always been justified by men by equating both women and nature. *The Wandering Falcon* by Jamil Ahmad (2011) portrays this unjust behaviour with the women representing nature in this book while the men with their strict tribal values- the Pashtunwali code, representing culture.

In this novel, various forms of oppression of women are explored like domination, honour killing, women given no voice of their own, commodification, exploitation, objectification, subjugation, suppression, marginalization, treatment of women like slaves, no freedom of choice, violence, prostitution. All these forms of violence are justified by men through assimilating women and nature and considering them as one and the same. Just like nature is violated by culture likewise women are subjugated by culture in the same manner.

Men have always wanted to keep women under their control and supervision just like they have done with nature for centuries. If women try to act in any way on their own or against the patriarchy, then they are dealt with an iron hand. This can be seen in the first story of this book 'The Sins of a Mother' when the daughter of a Sardar elopes with her lover to escape living with an impotent man whom she is forcefully married to, her father has her hunted down and she is killed in the name of honour since she was thought by her father to be her property and likewise he deemed it fit to have her killed when she acted against her father's will and wish. This shows how women are dealt with if they try to act out of their free will. When the lovers find out that they are being followed by the tribe, the lover finds it suitable to shoot down his beloved before she is caught by the Siahpada tribe exercising his control over her life. "The man shot her in the back while she was still speaking" (Ahmad, 2011, p.13).

The women in the story 'The Death of Camels' can be seen working and performing domestic duties for their husbands and even their guests as directed by the men of their household. Like nature, women can be seen providing their services but in turn, they are not even acknowledged. Their help is taken for granted as if men are entitled to be mere takers as is the case with nature and not providers. As it is believed that nature must be bound into service so women are also expected to be so. The women are portrayed here as if they have no thinking and opinions of their own and they can be moulded into whatever the head of their household pleases.

The women too were busy, cooking and milking the she-camels and sheep, or suckling their babies. ... It was Gul Jana's turn to cook for the family that evening, but the other wife was helping her by baking the bread... 'The general and his son are here,' he addressed his wives. 'Prepare for their dinner tonight' (Ahmad, 2011, p.39-42).

The authoritative position of men and the submissive status of women has been pictured vividly by Jamil Ahmad through this event. The women are only treated like slaves. They are not even considered humans let alone partners of men. The women are expected to follow the orders of the men of their household. Their role is limited to just rearing children and providing domestic services for their husbands just like nature is expected to only provide without giving anything in return to it. This further shows how nature and women are equated as a means to suppress and dominate both. Regarding this, Susan Griffin (2016) points out, "A woman should be an enthusiastic slave to the man to whom she has given her heart, it is declared. 'I am a woman again – a woman at your feet,' a woman is said to have said" (p.33). It is up to men in the patriarchal society how they treat their women. Women have no voice of their own just like nature that cannot speak for itself. In the story 'The Death of Camels' it is evident from an instance when a man has planned to go visit his mother's husband to get the bride price from him as he is not ready to give it to his mother on her insistence. This shows that the voice of women is not deemed important at all and even if they try to speak for

themselves, they are not heard by the men. So, the son has to go and ask for his mother's right as she, being a woman has no voice of her own and even if she does, it is given no importance. The status of both women and nature is evident through this.

What is this story I hear about you?... That you are suing another Kharot?... 'The case is against a man who has left the fold... It is against a Kharot who is now settled in the city. He cannot really be considered a true Kharot any longer. The devil married my mother after my father's death and did not pay any bride price. As the eldest son, the money is due to me and the man refuses to pay it. I have to get it out of him. My mother agrees with me... You are right, son... No man respects his wife or her family unless he pays a price for her' (Ahmad, 2011, p. 41-42).

Jamil Ahmad clearly portrays the place of women in a tribal society in these lines. They are only considered worthy of respect if they are paid for by their husband. Their value is only monetary like an object. If they are given away to their in-laws for free without any payment, then they have zero value. It is evident here that women earn respect only if they are bought by their husband in exchange for bride price. Women independently do not possess any worth. When they prove to be worthy by becoming commodifiable then they earn respect from their spouse and his family. This sheds light on the commodification of women and how even sons sell their mothers to earn respect in the society. The humiliation of women is clearly depicted through this instance. Like nature, they are also priced and sold to men-the bearers of culture who are presented here as the sole owners of women.

In the story 'A Kidnapping', a woman who elopes with a man is raped by a gang on the way. After the gang leaves, the man accuses her of being disloyal and of willingly giving access to her body to the rapists. The woman's reaction is quite strange as she remarks that although it is true that her body has been violated but nature has created her body for this very purpose. This shows just like nature is designed for men to dominate and use as per their will, women's bodies are also created for this very purpose – to gratify men's desires, to be only used as a sexual object in the hands of men.

The story goes, sahib, that a young boy and girl eloped and were running away from their homes, when they suddenly found themselves surrounded by a pack of ruffians out for mischief. These rascals, men of no honour, surrounded the couple and threatening them with death, dishonoured the girl... The young man after his fear had died, became furious with the girl. He accused her of having proven untrustworthy, disloyal and faithless. He also charged her with possessing no sense of shame or modesty as she had let so many men violate her body (Ahmad, 2011, p.99-100).

The girl responds by saying,

You are right. My body has been violated, but think of one thing. My body has been fashioned by nature for this very purpose. What was done to me was indeed wrong, but truly speaking. It is, as it were, only what nature had intended for me when it created me (Ahmad, 2011, p.100).

In another story, 'The Guide' a traveller narrates how girls fetch water from a spring, miles away, with pitchers on their heads. They take three trips to get water for their menfolk and when their guests arrive they make an extra trip to get water for those men too. It can be seen how women are treated like slaves fetching water from far-off lands for the men of their

households and not just their own men folk but also when their guests arrive, women are expected to serve them too. Again, like nature, women are utilized for their services setting aside their humanity completely. The women are required to fit into the assigned gender roles made by the bearers of culture for them.

A few girls walked past with water pitchers on their heads to fetch water from some spring, perhaps miles away. They would make at least three trips during the day to get water for their menfolk, and yet find it within themselves to make another trip to refill the wayside casks which provided water for travellers (Ahmad, 2011, p.112).

In the same story, some people can be observed collecting firewood who are again women and small girls. They are described as carrying cutting tools, water bottles and a day's food just like animals are geared for work. The women are expected to work as slaves for the men of their household. As Susan Griffin (2016) in her book *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* writes, "Women are the weaker sex, it is said, and therefore those women have survived who best succeeded in pleasing men" (p.30).

We met parties of firewood collectors. These were usually small bands of women and girls who moved exceedingly fast so they could reach and occupy the best sites before the others did. The matrons walked in front while the very young girls-some of them hardly eight or nine years old-skipped along in the rear. Apart from carrying cutting tools, each had her own water bottle (usually an old army issue) and a small inconspicuous bundle, which contained the day's food (Ahmad, 2011, p.113).

The writer clearly portrays the stereotypical role of women through this example. Women are expected to work for the heads of their house that are men. Their duty is to provide free of cost services and they cannot even question why they are bound into service without any incentives. By doing so, the bearers of culture claim that women are tamed into obedience of men which is compulsory for women living in such a male-centred society as it is the only way of salvation for the weaker sex in such a conservative society.

In the story 'A Pound of Opium', one can clearly see the commodification of women when a father recalls how he sold his daughter Sherakai- the Tiger's daughter, for a mere pound of opium and a hundred rupees only. The way in which a man who happens to be the father of the girl, can be seen looking at his daughter only in terms of her commodification and utility here by bartering his daughter off in return for a fickle amount of hundred rupees and a pound of opium. This shows how women are treated second to animals, by being sold off for the temporary gratification of the father's desires. This reminds one of the character of Michael Henchard in Hardy's (2003) *The Mayor of Casterbridge* who sells his wife and daughter to a sailor in a fair for only five guineas. "Oh he remembered now what had happened to Sherakai, the Tiger's Daughter. He had sold her to somebody before he left for a pound of opium and a hundred rupees" (Ahmad, 2011, p.142).

The girl is bought back by her mother from the local prince to whom she was sold by her father. The mother saved money for a whole year to free her daughter from the prince and initially the prince refused to give her back but then agreed upon returning the girl to her mother. One notices how women are treated like sex-objects regardless of their age as the prince tried to force himself upon the girl before returning her back to her mother.

At one time, when she was eight years of age, she had lost all hope. That was when her father had sold her for a pound of opium and a hundred rupees to a

local prince. It had taken her mother another year to save the money to buy her back, and still the prince had refused to let her go... It had taken prayers, pleadings and luck- not to speak of her mother's savings- to secure her return, and that too not before her master had made an attempt to prove his boast before he lost her. He had failed but mercifully had not damaged her seriously (Ahmad, 2011, p.143-144).

In 'The Betrothal of Shah Zarina', there is a poor man Fateh Mohammed who lives from hand to mouth doing various jobs to earn. He comes across a man who captured a bear and trained it for a living. When the man asks for his daughter's hand in marriage, the poor father finds this prospect too good to refuse and so, agrees upon this proposal. The father does not bother asking for the consent of the daughter whose marriage he arranged without her knowledge. Being the head of the house and the representative of culture, the father deemed it fit to marry his daughter without seeking for her approval to a man he thought would be fine to be her husband merely on the basis of his earning. The girl's father imposed his decision upon the girl as if the girl was not able to make decisions regarding her life on her own. Here, we see the controlling figure of the father who asserts his authority over his daughter about the most important decision of her life and the daughter is not given the freedom to choose the man she wants to marry on her own. "In one of the communities of ice cutters, he had met a young man who had captured a bear during the winter and trained it to perform. This young man had asked for the hand of Shah Zarina" (Ahmad, 2011, p.160).

The girl's father goes to the extent that he sets the bride price for his daughter with the young man as soon as he asks for her hand and even takes some of it in advance for the wedding preparations and the rest of the bride price is given to him before the marriage ceremony begins. Fateh Mohammed has been living a very difficult life due to little to no finances. In this terrible situation when he finds a prospect who earns and settles the bride price with him in advance, he decides to sell his daughter to this man to ease his own life. His daughter can be taken as a symbol of nature here who was at first made to serve like a servant in her own house and then sold off by her father as a commodity to gratify his own desires.

The negotiation about the bride price had been successful and the marriage would be taking place after one month... Fateh Mohammed had brought a part of the bride price in advance with him... The father counted out the price of the bride money and handed it over to Fateh Mohammed before the wedding ceremony started (Ahmad, 2011, p.160-161).

After the marriage when Shah Zarina and her husband set on foot to go home, they come across many villages. During this journey, once or twice the villages dogs try to attack the bear and when this happens, the husband instead of defending his wife he defends the bear as it is his source of income. Here, we see the materialistic approach of the husband who cares for the commodity that is the bear and since the wife has no such utility, she is ignored. Even nature is protected by culture when it seems to be of some benefit. Since, Shah Zarina is of no such use she is totally ignored by the husband and he does not care if she gets hurt. As long as the bear that is his source of income is alright the husband is fine.

Once or twice, the village dogs came together and tried to attack the bear...The first time this happened, she felt cold and lonely because her husband was desperately trying to defend the bear and she had to protect herself... (Ahmad, 2011, p.162-163).

When the couple stops for some rest at an inn and the husband rents a room, it is used by the bear at night and by Shah Zarina in the morning when her husband and the bear go for daily wage earning. The girl unpacks her belongings to put those in the room in the morning while she has to pack all her belongings again at night when her husband and the bear arrive, to leave the room vacant. This keeps going every day as they move from town to town. "She could not understand why the bear had to have a room and they could not. Once she asked her husband. He looked at her coldly and said, "I can get another wife, but not another bear" (Ahmad, 2011, p.164).

One can view the place of women here which is second to an animal and that too because the animal is of use, it helps the man earn while the wife is of no such use financially so she is kept in a deplorable condition and treated worse than a wild animal. The exploitation of nature is again evident here. Both the woman and the animal are suffering. The woman is not given her due right as a human, let alone as a wife, whereas the bear is captured and confined to the walls of the room instead of letting it be free as it serves some purpose to the husband. Shah Zarina still puts up with this humiliation and undergoes this torture but when she sees her husband's behaviour does not change in the slightest and despite her serving the husband and his bear, she is not acknowledged then she decides to leave her husband and goes back to her parent's house. Unfortunately, the parents are not eager to see their daughter returning as they consider her as a burden, an extra mouth to be fed and given their miserable financial condition, it is difficult for the family to support Shah Zarina. Instead of sympathising with her, she is considered a burden. As Ahmad (2011) highlights;

Shah Zarina suffered in silence. One night, as she lay awake, she heard her parents talking in loud whispers. She stayed still and overheard snatches of their conversation. "She sits brooding all day, eating more than any of her sisters do. She hardly does any housework," her stepmother complained... She has created a terrible problem for us all (p.166).

Heartbroken by this harsh reality, Shah Zarina decides to leave the house at once and picking up some of her belongings sets off on foot not knowing what will become of her. During her journey she comes across a man who appears to be a sympathiser and a well-wisher of hers. He inquires from the girl where she is headed off to and why is she all alone in the midst of nowhere. The naïve girl narrates her whole tale to the stranger and fails to see through the facade of this wolf which is ready to pounce upon its prey at any favourable moment like it does in the folk tale 'Little Red Riding Hood'. "What are you doing girl, walking by yourself at this time? There should be a brother, or a husband or a father, walking beside you. A girl needs protection" (Ahmad, 2011, p.167).

These lines of the man reflect the state of the patriarchal society that has so deeply ingrained the narrative of men being the knight in shining armour for the women and the fact that women cannot even protect themselves and require the protection of another man. This again links women to nature which cannot look after itself, tend to its needs on its own and requires the assistance of a man to provide for it.

Realizing the helplessness of the young woman, the man conveniently lies to her about helping her as he is helping one of his cousins too who is present with him at the moment to find a job as a maid in some well-off family. The poor girl is easily convinced by the cunning man and immediately decides to join him in his journey.

In the last story by Jamil Ahmad (2011) 'Sale Completed' as the name of the story suggests the poor, innocent women unbeknownst of their tragic fate continue to embark upon the journey that is to lead them into utter disdain and disillusionment with the sly fox natured man. "He was half-tempted to keep her but frowned at such foolish thoughts. If he started behaving so irresponsibly, he could end up a pauper without too much effort" (Ahmad, 2011, p.169).

The man wants to keep Shah Zarina for his own personal sexual gratification but he realizes that this woman is to be his source of income and so he disregards the idea of using her himself. She is not spared by him due to a change of his heart but due to the fact that if she is left untouched then her worth would increase while trading her off to the man that would put the highest bid for the young woman. If he uses her himself his business would go into the drain and he will be left penniless. As nature is tended to if it is to be sold off to someone else same is the case here with Shah Zarina. Since she is considered a commodity by the stranger any harm done to her would decrease her value and in turn her market rate. Women are purely treated here as objects. "Thursday was the sale of women" (Ahmad, 2011, p.172). This shows how women are considered commodifiable like animals. As markets are arranged for purchasing animals same is the case with women. They are displayed for the customers to buy whichever woman based on her looks and physique they like. Women are regarded as mere objects which can be bought and sold by men as they please.

Women, some little more than infants, some already on the threshold between middle and old age; some who laughed at their fate and others who never stopped crying. Some who appeared once and then vanished completely. Others came again and again, sold sometimes to one man and then to another (Ahmad, 2011, p.173).

Women are sold to brothels in prostitution regardless of their age. Even girls almost as little as infants are also sold in prostitution. There are even women who are bought and then sold on again and again just like a commodity as if those women are no longer humans but just sexual objects used as per the will of men.

When the man is selling Sherakai he remarks, "She claims that she fell in love with me and wished me to carry her off, but I think she prefers humiliation from total strangers than by those she knows. You may rest assured that she will make a cheerful and willing worker," he told the brothel agents" (Ahmad, 2011, p.176-177). The man states that although the woman likes her but since he is a businessman he has no feelings to spare for her and being the bearer of culture he thinks it necessary to set his emotions aside and being practical, sell the woman to a brothel house. The way the man speaks about the woman shows as if the woman has no thinking of her own and like an animal, she can be sold to anyone who bids the highest on her. Again, objectification and commodification of the women is evident through this instance.

When Shah Zarina's turn to be sold comes. Her dealer's statement about her is, 'I believe she is a virgin so far,' said Afzal Khan. 'And if I could help it, I would rather sell her for marriage' (Ahmad, 2011, p.177). Even the concept of marriage is looked at in terms of its use and monetary value. The young woman has a higher rate than other women as she is considered worthy due to her virginity, the fact that she has not been exploited by men makes her more precious in the eyes of the seller. Nature unharmed makes it more worthy in terms of selling off. Once more, women are viewed merely in terms of their commodification which

reduces the status of women to only an object to be sold in the market. The fact that they are humans is completely ignored and they are treated as inanimate beings like nature with no right to their bodies and possessing no voice of their own to speak for themselves.

Conclusion

The Wandering Falcon unveils the harsh reality of the division of culture and nature, highlighting how this separation leads to the degradation of both. All the women in this novel are the victims of biases created by the tribal culture. Ahmad portrays various modes of female oppression at the hands of culture. Women are killed in the name of honour, they are treated like slaves, commodified, violated and sold to brothels for prostitution. Such portrayal of women's oppression highlights the urgent need to create and sustain an egalitarian society where men acknowledge women as their equals. Survival of both genders in such an environment is only possible if they recognize each other and see eye to eye. Through various instances of nature-culture dichotomy, Jamil shows how the patriarchal society needs to be re-evaluated in order for a peaceful co-existence of nature and culture.

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