

## BEYOND THE NARRATIVE: A FEMINIST STYLISTIC APPROACH TO FRAGMENTATION IN TEHMINA DURRANI'S BLASPHEMY

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### Abstract

*The phenomenon of fragmentation is considered as a linguistic and stylistic tool in the novel Blasphemy by Tehmina Durrani that is addressed in the research paper by analysing it with the help of Feminist Stylistics that has been developed by Sara Mills. The study is a combination of both qualitative and the quantitative methodology, as it carries out a specific analysis of the text to get the results about the way language constructs, as well as re-enforces the fragmentation of the female body in a patriarchal discourse. They provide an impressive table, listing individual lexical items and formulations that help operate the perception of women as non wholesome rather than as coherent individuals. The results demonstrate that the language use in the example of Blasphemy greatly supports the gendered stereotypes and the objectification of female bodies, which contributes to the interpretation of the systematic oppression and violence against females in the novel. Such a study will be helpful in the area of feminist literary criticism because it will help to get to understand the stylistic processes within which gendered identities are formed and deformed in South Asian fiction writing.*

**Keywords:** Feminist Stylistics, Fragmentation, Tehmina Durrani, Blasphemy, Textual Analysis, Patriarchal Discourse, South Asian Literature

### 1 Introduction

Feminist literary criticism has progressively advanced to question not only thematically how women were imagined but the linguistic systems and rhetorical figures of style in which gendered identities were being established in texts. The theory presented by Sara Mills as Feminist Stylistics remains one of the main contributions to the field in question, as it lays emphasis on how language itself may be used either to reassert and enforce patriarchal ideologies or to challenge these ideologies. Another of the fundamental ideas in the context of the theory by Mills is that of fragmentation which is a stylistic and linguistic technique that is usually employed to represent the bodies or rather identities of women as disjointed, objectified or in parts and thereby, lacking personhood. This critical method offers an important frame of reference in terms of how literary works facilitate (or resist) gendered power systems. The novel Blasphemy by Tehmina Durrani comes out to be a strong work that reveals the harsh truth about patriarch domination in the South Asian society. Being a

personal and socio-political tale, the novel reflects the painful existence of Heer, a woman who is a victim of a marriage full of violence, religious hypocrisy and misogyny. The brutal

and vivid diction of Durrani weaves an argumentative work around the religious and cultural institutions which perpetuate the oppression of women. But in addition to its topical concerns, *Blasphemy* stands as a useful site of focus on style, exhibiting a way in which language itself may be used to be a part of the process of building on the fractured planes of female life within patriarchal societies.

This paper aims to use the notion of fragmentation employed by Sara Mills in *Feminist Stylistics* when exploring the way that feminine body and identity can be disintegrated as pairing with linguistic choices in the novel *Blasphemy*. Using the qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study not only performs the text analysis but also creates the empirical data in the form of the tables that list particular words and phrases related to the body fragmentation. The research proposal seeks to fill the gap between analytical stylistics and statistical numbers in an effort to provide a strong case of how fragmentation is used by male-dominated literature as a discourse of patriarchy.

In the end, this work hopes to contribute to the general feminist discussion of literary criticism by demonstrating the way that stylistic move, like fragmentation, work on the other level of a narrative to support oppressive ideologies. Such minor processes are important to understand in order to confront how literature can reinforce damaging gender constructs. Its emphasis on *Blasphemy* provides not only an approach, then, towards demonstrating the timeless value of feminist stylistics in constructing interpretations of South Asian fiction, but it also allows the researcher to stress the importance of identifying and opposing linguistic trends speaking towards women as repressed bodies of zeros and units.

### **1.1 Research Questions**

1. How does the author fragmentize the womens' bodies in the novel?
2. Why are women fragmentized and not men?

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

1. To analyze the fragmentation of women in the novel.
2. To find out the reason behind fragmentation of women and not men.

### **1.3 Significance**

The work is of great importance in the context of feminist literary criticism, stylistics, and the South Asian literature. The study presents an insightful understanding of how linguistic decisions lead to the description and perpetuating patriarchal oppression. It extends thematic analysis into discussions of subtle but strong influence of language on shaping the perception of the readers of womens bodies and the perceptions of their identities to prove that the stylistic features are not only aesthetic but also the carriers of the ideological meaning. The fact that the study has relied on both qualitative and quantitative approaches also increases its contribution. Although the feminist stylistic study is found to be mainly quantitative in most cases, this study adds value to the study of feminist stylistics as it adds statistical data to back up textual observations. The lexical table of the items based on the bodily fragmentation is the empirical demonstration of linguistic patterns that help close the main gap between the theoretical discourse and the measurable attributes in the text. The double method does provide us with a pattern of future research that aims to merge strict stylistics and quantitative data. The work in the end helps in understanding how such mechanisms of style as fragmentation can subtly support oppressive ideologies and should encourage the reader, scholar and even writer to be even more critical of how language is used to construct reality. In bringing these linguistics patterns to light, the study serves to support those struggling to reinvent literary practices and break down the negative images of women and thus facilitate the larger mission of the feminist research and social reform.

### **1.4 Delimitation**

The given research is limited to the inquiry into the study of the novel *Blasphemy* by Tehmina Durrani as the chief text. Although the issues of fragmentation and its ramifications to the feminist stylistics could be discussed in the context of several pieces of literature in South Asia, the given research selectively concentrates on *Blasphemy* as it enables thorough and in-depth analysis of fragmentation and feminist stylistics in a limited text. With this focus, there is a benefit of being able to analyze the language and stylistic features much more closely, but it also implies that the results cannot immediately be applied to the entire South Asian literature or to the other work by Durrani. Another limitation of the study is that it assumes the focus of attention on the linguistic and stylistic depiction of the disintegration of the female body and does not develop in detail other thematic issues that run through *Blasphemy*, namely the hypocrisy of religion, the aspect of social-political criticism or the trauma of consciousness. Although the aspects are also interconnected to the story of the novel, they cannot be discussed as the main concern of the stylistic analysis.

## 2 Literature Review

The groundwork was done by Sara Mills (1995) focusing on the systematic ways by which language constructs gender identities and has a tendency to reinstate structures of patriarchal power. Her definition of fragmentation, whereby the female body or identity is shown as disintegrated or objectified has proved to be a significant critical measure used to make out unseen ideological pattern in view of the literary writings. The framework discussed by Mills is especially applicable to the analysis of the texts such as *Blasphemy* in which choices of styles are not only aesthetic but extremely ideological since linguistic constructions can facilitate the oppression of women. The paper relies too much on the thoughts of Mills in exploring the mechanisms of linguistic fragmentation as they are performed in the text of Durrani to connect the spheres of stylistics and feminist criticism.

*Blasphemy* by Tehmina Durrani (1998) has received a lot of attention on the theme level in regard to the oppression of patriarchal society and the hypocrisy of religion in the South Asian community. Its socio-political implications, as well as its autobiographical aspects have been examined by fellow scholars like Shaikh (2000), Aziz (2002), who focused on its importance as protest narration. Nevertheless, what is still lacking are the stylistic studies that aimed at how the language of Durrani itself may create or disrupt a patriarchal discourse. This gap is filled by the current study; however, instead of focusing on thematic criticism, it focuses attention on the linguistic strategies deployed by the author to form the impression of the female body and subjectivity in *Blasphemy*.

Mick Toolan (1998), has also had a great contribution in stylistics where steps on how to conduct strict linguistics research of literary works have been advanced and significances such as techniques of collecting quantitative data and analysing it. His focus on empirical methods, like the creation of lexical lists and counts of frequency supports feminist stylistic studies, because it will allow statements of interpretation to be measurable, or rather calculable. The quantitative part of analysis in this study is informed by Toolan in the sense that it used her methods in developing a table listing the words used in depicting the dismembering of the female body in *Blasphemy*. This combination of interpretation and qualitative data with the quantitative data increases the objectivity and depth of the stylistic analysis.

A more generic theorizing is the discussion of subaltern voices, often presented by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) in her argument of linguistic marginalization in postcolonial writings. Spivak provides a view that the words of the subaltern women are lost or distorted by the floodgate of dominant narratives, which also fits Durrani in *Blasphemy* in presenting Heer. Even though stylistics is not discussed by Spivak directly, her ideas can largely

contribute to the perception of the present research of what linguistic fragmentation can be used as an instrument of erasure that can further support the invisibility and lack of power of female subjects in the context of patriarchy.

Lesley Jeffries (2007) goes further to use the feminist linguistic approach to find out how the female body is constructed textually using fragmented and objectifying language in various genres of literature. Her studies have shown that this linguistic behavior is carried out by majority of people and helps perpetuate the difference between male and female power. The manner in which Jeffries treats the topic indicates the importance of exploring particular lexical and syntactic patterns to demonstrate the role of texts in objectification of women. Her contribution makes a comparative outlook and methodological contribution to the research that is being considered aiming at discovering the same phenomenon as she did by observing the roles of fragmentation as style in *Blasphemy* to characterize women as disjointed objects instead of complete subjects.

### **3. Methodology**

A mixed-methods research design is implemented in the current work that combines a qualitative and a quantitative approach in the analysis of Tehmina Durrani novel *Blasphemy* in the light of the Feminist Stylistics developed by Sara Mills. The qualitative part will pay attention to the analytical study of the text, with an emphasis on the presence of stylistic elements that help accomplish the fragmentation of the female body, whereas the quantitative part would include collecting and sorting the words, dealing with the fragmentation of the body. Such integrative process will reveal the possibility of looking into a broad view of how language works to support the patriarchal discourse in the chosen text not only explicitly but also implicitly.

#### **3.1 Tools for Data Collection**

In the qualitative analysis, close reading is adopted as the major tool where stylistic technique by Mills (1995) and Toolan (1998) are followed. This comes in form of detecting and analysing the linguistic markings like the use of lexis, syntactic structure, pattern of transitivity and use of imagery which help to represent the female body in a fragmented way. In the quantitative part, its lexical analysis was performed with a manual coding method. The text material was further filtered in search of particular words and phrases that mentioned the female body parts or that referred to a body in part. The results were entered into a table-like form. By using this table, the frequency and the distribution of fragmentations related language found in the novel is evident as empirical evidence.

#### **3.2 Sample**

The book that will solely be taken as part of the sample in this study is the book *Blasphemy* by Tehmina Durrani. All the excerpt was also analyzed so that they could not miss the examples of linguistic fragmentation. They simply dwelt upon passages that related the female body or the female identity in fragmenting, objectifying or disarticulated ways. Other thematic issues that are encountered in the novel were not the central themes and were therefore not the object of the analysis like religious hypocrisy or political criticism.

#### **3.3 Theoretical Framework**

The theory used in this study is the Feminist Stylistics by Sara Mills (1995) and her idea of fragmentation as a type of stylistic/ideological device. To Mills, language has the potential to disintegrate the identities of women by offering them in bodily parts or in fragmentary states instead of being whole subjects. This notion is essential to consider how *Blasphemy* shapes its female main character and constitutes a stereotype of female exploitation in the patriarchal



system. Also, some information about power and ideology in language provided by Critical Discourse Analysis is used in the analysis, but the Feminist Stylistics introduced by Mills is the main theory applied in order to observe the stylistic elements of the text.

#### 4. Fragmentation

The easiest definition of fragmentation is that it is the mechanism through which the characters in texts were represented as the body parts of the characters instead of representing them as the people (Mills, 1995, p.166). The fragmentation of the female therefore is in relation to male gaze, and the female is referred to as an object, a collection of objects, to the male gaze (Mills, 1995, p.133). Women representations being separated into physical parts occur a whole lot more occasionally than do men representations. Not only this holds true with the obscene material, but you also share photographs, emotions and love poetry, of various kinds. Later, the process of dismembering of the female body in the writing of literature has been broadly observed. The images of men, then once more, are represented in the way of their bodies in general and not in divided segments.

We can go all over with the sexist language and the stereotypical language noted in the novel *Blasphemy* (1998). It is only normal that the linguistic breakdown of women is evident in all anti-feminist pieces of literature. So is the case with the chosen novel. The novel abounds in talking about the bodies of woman as a whole by talking about the parts in their anatomies. Male bodies could be fragmented but the proportions between the fragmentation of male bodies and female bodies is nothing but hell different. The process of fragmentation of women in novel begins already first chapter of the novel.

Not contenting themselves with beating themselves cruelly and mourning were all the women of the household without regard to age, or relation to the Pir Sain, whereof the bearer was one. Fragmentation of the female body is revealed in the words used by the writer as, beating their breasts rather than beating themselves. It indicates that their bodies belong to the world of sex and breasts are mentioned: Old aunts, sisters, stepsisters, my four inseparable sisters-in-law, they all came, beating their breasts (Durrani, 1998, p.03). The family had a news of total devastation when the Pir Sain was killed. Mourned and wailed they all the tragedy that had fallen on them. The women; particularly they mourned their fashion.

The men made no reply. I was frozen when the hot eyes of one of them caught my terrified eyes (Durrani, 1998, p.02). The lines mentioned above in the novel *Blasphemy*, (1998), indicate how the fear of her in-laws is expressed in a clear language by the female protagonist of the novel Heer. As she said, her stare, which could be described as frightening, was regarded by her the sharp eyes of her in-laws. It is clear indication that Heer is being only referred to by her eyes but not as a whole person nor as a woman but only her eyes.

In other paragraphs, Heer again narrates her experience of how the maids of their haveli lamented the death of their religious boss Peer Sain: One by one they slobbered over me with loud kisses and louder sobs. Tapping their breasts they bewailed, „May Allah grant you patience to live a long life without a husband! ” (Durrani, 1998, p.03)

Heer mentions how the domestic girls of the household grieved by “wailing and beating their breasts”. The ladies of their large house endeavoured to comfort her by embracing her and whipping themselves. But, grieving women are not called as women but given a definition of females as sexual objects. The unnecessary to refer to the parts of the female body like the breasts depicts the sexism in the language as well as fragmentation of the women. The paragraph mentioned above illustrates, more than clearly, the way females are divided into their anatomical parts and not in general.

Likewise in the same page, Heer talks about the tale of mourning. A „crumpled piece of flesh“ is what is called the old maid who was also a foster mother to the deceased antagonist Peer Sain. It implies that even an elderly woman is stereotyped and disintegrated. The language employed on the old maid is incredibly derogatory in nature which shows how females are treated in the society.

Moreover, as the narration unfolds, we are presented with a great deal of the fragmentation of the body of woman, e.g., we see: that my thoughts, like widow, scatters on appearance of widow, beats her breast, falls down to my feet and furthers the plea that I should not leave them. Thereafter, the three of them gripped my ankles until I kicked them off” (Durrani, 1998, p.04). In this very excerpt at the beginning of the first chapter of the novel we observe the widow and her two daughters who took shelter and the haveli of Peer Sain. The mother of widow, her daughters, and Heer are fragmentized on several occasions. The author does not mention the account of poor women refugees and the protagonist as a whole but in their body parts as words like breast, feet, and ankle are mentioned.

I fished a packet of cigarettes out of my breast, then yet another dip inside my brassiere and there emerged a disposable lighter (Durrani, 1998, p.04). The above extract of the novel indicates how the main character is disintegrated since the word breast is applied to her bodily image and also the word brassiere is employed to the garment covering her intimate parts, which again is depriming to ladies, sexist and stereotypic. The main character is depicted as a chain smoker, but in fact a woman who belongs to an eastern family and lives in a merged family cannot be a chain smoker in that matter. This image of a women character also refers to the fact that women are depicted in a very negative way in the novel.

Cheel would go to cross her hands over her breast and stand motionless so as to observe, what is happening in the haveli and then report it to the master Pir Sain. The manner in which the standing position of Cheel is described is descriptive of the fact that her body has been fragmented and her chest is mentioned to appease male gaze: As usual her arms were crossed over her breast (Durrani, 1998, p.06). Even in the line of duty the spy maid Cheel had her mode of standing by herself.

She recalled Rajaji and beat her breasts with both hands. (Durrani, 1998, p.08) What we hear is the background on how the whole family lived and how her mother was mourning the death of her son in law. The mother of Heer laments over how the grandchildren have been made orphans as she beats her „breast“. Once again, the mother of Heer is fragmented because her own body part is mentioned because she was drumming her breast in the state of desolation.

Heer was an addict to cigars and tranquilizers. The cigarettes were smoked through and with the smoke her fears and tensions in life came out. She would use to conceal and to store the cigarettes in her brassier and fumble on her breast to bring a cigarette. The term breast reveals that she is cut up into pieces that gratify the sexual urges of men: she writes that fumbling at her breast she searched out the cigarettes then lit them up inhaled and some fears were discharged (Durrani, 1998, p.08). Heer became depressed and he was anxious. As a means of consolation, she would take sedative to console her.

And to herself she answered her question, because you are so very beautiful. Ma could be seen smiling through her ivory skin surrounding her fine amber eyes” (Durrani, 1998, p.14). In chapter 02, the heroine Heer tells about her youthful period and tells the story about how she and her mother have come to see the holy Peer Sain in order to take his blessings since they live in poverty and there is no father. The widower of three times the age of Heer, Peer Sain, proposes marriage to Heer, and her mother feels ecstatic with this bit of good news. Ma starts describing the physical beauty of herself and her two daughters that displays fragmentation. The color of the skin of Ma is described as ivory and the color of her eyes is

described as amber. The case is similar to that of Ma whose beauty is not discussed as a unit but as her various body parts.

My aunt (the flour mill) massage oil into my skin and she made me an ivory carving, then she clapped her hands and said, You are the beauty of brides which I have ever seen. I could see the diamond whites and amber centres of my eyes shone jewels upon my face in the mirror. Gold dust fell down on dull red cheekbones and mingled with hollowest depressions. A ruby-red mouth smiled to the reflection.

Is this me? I query in astonishment.

As compared to the bright red silk frock which was loosely hanging over my skinny and lanky body, the white cotton choridar pyjama just stuck to my legs.” (Durrani, 1998, p.21) Heer recalls how she was bathed and her rich aunt got her entire body with bridal makeup on in pre-wedding preparations. Heer was flashing jewels as her face and her cheekbones were sprinkled with dull red and the mouth was a flaming ruby red mouth and this Heer was hanging loose in expensive pajamas. Several concepts, which demonstrate disintegration of female body, appear in the same paragraph. When Heer was getting ready as a bride to her wedding, she has been caked in makeup to the point that she looks as though she has been sunk in whitening creams. She wore a white dress and she resembled a fairy tale princess since she had a long brown hair (Durrani, 1998, p.21). Her aunt used ointments on her skin and turned her skin as white as ivory carving (Durrani, 1998, p.21). Then her aunt cried you are the prettiest bride I ever saw.

Once Heer stared in the mirror she saw her face all glittering like a diamond: go in the mirror and she saw diamond white and amber center of her eyes rose up like jewels on her face (Durrani, 1998, p.21).

She was smirking at her reflection in the mirror and her cheeks resembled the dull red stones of rubies: “Dull red cheekbones, a ruby red mouth smiled back in the mirror” (Durrani, 1998, p.21). There are a lot of terms applied to point out the body of Heer as a source of pleasure in sex. In one paragraph, she is torn apart in numerous aspects.

I glanced at my painted toes and raised one, heavy gold anklets sent it down. The nose ring, the anklets and the hundreds of bangles were, to me, like fetters. I am in another place and someone is errantly putting on high-heeled sandals on my feet (Durrani, 1998, p.22).

Heer was a beautiful teen bridal bride who made a good preparation. She reminds herself of her picturesque physical dressing. She remembers the time when her toes were painted first time in her life. The way her foot is plated with heavy gold anklelets, gold nose ring, hundreds of bangles, and the earrings are high heels.

All this was new and exciting to a poor orphan girl yet her body is characterized as torn pieces as the novel proceeds.

Even the leading female character cuts other females in bits which demonstrate moral decay of the eastern society. When Heer got lavished with care and the right kind of dressing, she appeared as a fantasy beautiful bride. A pull of her white shoulders with multicolored expensive-looking sequin and a large gold ornament called tikka in Punjabi having been hung on her forehead made Heer appear like a Queen (Durrani, 1998, p.22). Her “painted toes” were beautiful and gold was weighed down her “anklets” (Durrani, 1998, p.22).

Her nose ring had rendered her to look like mythical heroin (Durrani, 1998, p.22). The above words in quotations marks demonstrate, how Heer is dissected, time and time again.

Heer informs us about the body of the housemaid that was called Kaali. The eyes of Kaali were those of the female deer (Durrani, 1998, p.39) Kaali had doe eyes that danced. Her long and beautiful hair was given the liberty to drop on her face time and again Her hair flowed down messily on to her cheek (Durrani, 1998, p.39). The author has disintegrated the upper



part of Kaali to feed the male sexual fantasies. We find even servant girls are not safe against the attentions even of males.

When Heer was made aware about the suffering of Kaali, she was appalled. She drove Kaali into her laps (Durrani, 1998, p.43). She tried to console Kaali by holding her close to her chest (Durrani, 1998, p. 43). Kaali had her head over Heer breast and she even cried as much such that her eyes even wet (Durrani, 1998, p.43). Existence of Kaali was even gruesome than that of Heer. The writer is a beautiful writer who could have explained the situation simple like Heer tightened the hug against Kaali but words like arms, breast and eyes were used. These lines only indicate a fact that both Heer and Kaali are divided.

Pir Sain had beaten Heer so hard that she entered into the state of hallucination. She had a dream where maa was bending down on her body. Maa scratched her head with her hands (Durrani, 1998, p. 58). Heer was on her bed with her swollen teary eyes as Maa touched around the eyebrows moving down towards her daughter trying to give her a comfort (Durrani, 1998, p.58). Maa touched Heers cheekbones, her mouth and her gums, and put her cheeks on those of Heer (Durrani, 1998, p.58). With the face and deep searching gaze Maa looked at Heer. Heer has been torn apart by mentioning her various facial features.

The beauty of her young sisters who had just became adults was mesmerising to Heer. She explains about the physical appearance of her sisters during adolescence period: My sisters had become beautiful young ladies (Durrani, 1998, p.63). These were the eyes of Chitki, the younger sister of Heer which resembled a saucer and she had rose petal like lips (Durrani, 1998, p.63). The younger sister of Heer is seductively described on the basis of body shape. The use of all these words to describe her eyes and lips demonstrates how she was broken.

In the sixth chapter, Heer narrates an awful story of how one of his maids known as Badrung was killed by extreme punishment by Pir Sain and his men. The buttocks of Badrung were full of scares and wounds since she was being whipped by men of Pir Sain (Durrani, 1998, p.58). The hakeem who used to be the traditional physician attempted to cure her but his attempts failed. Badrung had been bleeding all over the head to buttocks. The moment her father came to console her and placed his hand on the head of Badrung the tired eyes became red and began to show tears (Durrani, 1998, p.85). The paragraph above gives the reader a picture of what did Pir Sain deal with the person who dared to raise their voices opposed to the wickedness of the Shrine and the false saint. The one who made the attempt to revolt against the shrine again was referred to as the blasphemer and people did not dare to come to his rescue: "No one dared to condole a blasphemer in death" (Durrani, 1998, p.85). The same happened to Badrung which was disjointed.

Heer visualizes imagery of how the younger daughter of the widow looked like after having been raped by Pir Sain. Being in the room, the girl stared at Heer with terrified eyes (Durrani, 1998, p.96). She was bitten by Pir Sain and her small mouth was filled with a handkerchief, body was naked and her child like breasts having teeth marks (Durrani, 1998, p.96). It writes down the body of the young daughter of the widow as a pornographic scene. She is disjointed in mentioning her body parts.

Heer describes the seductive body of Yathimri. The young woman Yathimri ended up being the seductress of the husband and the son of Heer. She would be smartly dressed and in revealing attires: Her eyes radiated over her brown skin like two beetles fighting in mud (Durrani, 1998, p.105). The hips of Yathimri were alluring such that she would wave them left and right and freeze them at some point (Durrani, 1998, p.105). The body of Yathimri is picturised with the view of sensuousness that provides pleasure to men.

Night fed the flesh or the flesh was fed by night. I was ill; I was afterward tortured, when it was finished (Durrani, 1998, p.106). The main character Heer and the orphan maid Yathimri who was rather a sex slave than a female servant. Both are mentioned as pieces of flesh and

nothing like human beings. The fragmentation of female body as the flesh is just so obvious. Heer is tortured and injured when she has been considered as a flesh body that can only be valued to have sex and no one cares when used as a human being.

She was everything like me. She was pale and aristocratic and always kept her head and shoulders vertically up whether she was glancing down (Durrani, 1998, p.108). Poor hero Heer gives description and physiological comparison between her daughter Guppi and her body. As she says, even in the physical appearance, the resemblance of her and Guppi was all the same. Colorless but delicate she was. Heer describes the pose of Guppi especially how she would keep her body straight despite the fact that she should be sitting and looking down. The phrase like pale, regal, head and shoulders emphasize on the body fragmentation of Guppi. Heer is reflecting the increasing body of her elder girl Guppi. She contrasts her daughter to her own father and her own person. She believes that Guppi appears to be her avatar of herself and nothing like her father Pir Sain. According to Heer everything about Heer was like me: pale and regal, her head and shoulders were straight up even, when she was looking down (Durrani, 1998, p.108). The issue of beauty in physics is apparently likened to that of her mother Heer with Guppi. She is disintegrated with mention of her skin, shoulders and head being sensuous.

As the fat fingers of the jagirdar were busily as it were the black rats over my naked body, the thought of purdah in the mind grew and grew (Durrani, 1998, p.147). Heer remembers the instances when she was projected to the Jagirdar as a sex object. It all happened that she was offered to a man to be taken as sex to be used by her own revered husband of God. She referred to such instances of post martial rape as when a rat runs on bare flesh. Even her body is broken to pieces which is purely very inhuman and gender discrimination, and is a sex symbol. Heer sketches the incident where she was offered to fat jagirdar to have sex.

He wrapped his huge hairy hands around the slim waist of teenager Heer like a sea octopus, what a treasure! said Jagirdar (Durrani, 1998, p.147). His drunken sight nearly came out of his sockets upon seeing naked neck of Heer. His plumpy fingers caressed the body of Heer like a rat and his fat lips sucked her ears (Durrani, 1998, p.147). Heer is pictured showing her naked body parts one after another to sensualise her scene.

In another scene Heer was summoned to get ready to entertain the guests of Pir Sain in the city. Heer was to come out as a prostitute. She was ready to put on her make up, she charged kohl into her glazed eyes. Heer would break the talcum powder in her cleavage so that it can fragrance more. She wore a black night gown, red lipstick. She went iconographic and perfumed herself, being a professional prostitute (Durrani, 1998, p.148). Heer has been disjointed in a suggestive manner to fulfill male sexual needs of the readers.

Heer reads the act when Pir Sain called in a girl to fulfill his sexual addiction, a girl so small that hardly was a woman. Upon entering the room Heer noticed a naked child huddled who tried to flatten her flat chest using her arms. Her crazed, petrified eyes were staring in the face of Heer, who scuffled her shawl and small frame with chaddar (Durrani, 1998, p.156).

Heer narrates the story that Pir Sain was a junky of sinking in the sex of underage girls. The writer of the novel has dissected the body parts of the small girl to gain sensual impression onto the readers.

Heer explains what happened when she went to see the lady that regarded her as a prostitute in the city. She invested to inform her that Heer is the wife to their holy saint. Heer was again dressed as a prostitute, her figure was barely covered by the tight shirt and she held a cigarette in her hand as well as a glass of whisky in another. The old woman was not able to believe it when she saw her, she clasped her mouth with her hand and her eyes came out in surprise. She also dropped at the feet of Heer and called her Bibiji. Heer raised her elbow and pointed her finger to the old woman, and threatened her that she shall not tell this to anyone,

otherwise her future generations would be annihilated by Heer. the old lady nodded her head in amazement and cried how canst thou bring the honour of her Pir to her filthy lips? As was discussed in the excerpt above, it indicates that the body of Heer and the old woman is mentioned as its parts and not as human body as a whole. The author reveals to us the way fragmentation is practiced in order to fulfil male sexual cravings.

At the final chapter, Heer plans to see the Pathan at night in order to talk to him about the nude videos that Pir Sain recorded about her naked. Heer gets ready and when she looks into the mirror, she sees the serious face on her. In an attempt to conceal her worsening health status which is reflected on her face she applies paint and powder on her face until it becomes white with cracks being plastered. There is a dripping red lipstick around her lips and black kohl over her eyes (Durrani, 1998, p.187). Now she appears in the mirror a woman who has seduced half of the village on commandments of her husband Pir Sain. The scene is sensualised with the description of her body parts one at a time starting with the upper parts. Desperate Heer, requests Dai to assist her to organize a meeting with Ranjha as she wished to recover the lost respect before she dies. Dai would suck her old chin and would roll her mouth about the nasvar (snuff) embedded in her gums (Durrani, 1998, p.198). Dai treated her like she is having suspicions over the reputation of Heer. Heer continued with requesting her aid, even though Dai had wary glances. Even old women are immune to physical objectification and body images being Dai's face is broken in parts and is casually referred to in an insulted manner.

**The consequence of the Fragmentation, whose reflection in Feminist Stylistics (1995) during the analysis of Blasphemy (1998) by Tehmina Durrani, proves to be enormous in reflecting as well as questioning exploitative structures of language. Fragmentation is present in the forms of sentence organization, disruptions in the narrative and broken description processes, replacing reality by reflections of fragmented lives of women in patriarchal and religious oppression. This stylistic element does not only reflect the psychological and emotional tornado of the characters, but also puts a break on the conventional narrative integrity, and makes the readers face the tumultuous and oppressing situations that control their lives. The flow of language is interrupted by words being fragmented, which can reflect defiance against the mainstream ideologies of dominance and which may disrupt the existent norm in terms of portraying how suffering can be presented without capitulation or acquiescence on the part of the women. It makes the readers critically approach the text gaining various layers of meanings and power relations, which lie behind the scattered and fractured manifestations. Fragmentation, by emphasizing disjointedness, provides a means of keeping in mind the novel as a whole since it addresses the issues of silenced: the thematic point that surrounds the novel, and the agency in feminist analysis literature.**

#### **4.4 Numerical Portion**

The researcher has summarised the numeric part of the negative words tending to paint the women of the novel in a bad picture.

The words were taken as Catalogues in *Blasphemy* (1998) as indicated in table 4.4.1.

The table 4.4.1 indicates the words which are applied as the use of the word of the novel *Blasphemy* (1998) as fragments of the words

Specific Gender (Word Level)	The novel <i>Blasphemy</i> (1998)	
	Words	Number of times used in the novel
Fragmentation	Breasts	34
Fragmentation	Ankle	02
Fragmentation	Cheekbones	02
Fragmentation	Painted Toes	03
Fragmentation	Penciled Eyebrows	05
Fragmentation	Flat Chest	02
Fragmentation	Foul Lips	12
Fragmentation	Eyes	12
Fragmentation	Ivory Skin	03
Fragmentation	Ruby Red Mouth	02
Fragmentation	Naked Body	09
Fragmentation	Cleavage	08
Fragmentation	Fearful Eyes	02

According to the above data table, the researcher has collected the words which constitute the Fragmentations that are meted out to women, in the novel chosen. It is here that the researcher finishes the analysis chapter.

## 5 Findings and Conclusion

A closer look at Feminist Stylistics applied by Sara Mills, to the work *Blasphemy* by Tehmina Durrani, showed that Sara Mills is constantly aware of the employment of linguistic fragmentation when describing the female body. Through the qualitative analysis, one can see that the protagonist, Heer, is often characterised by contrasting, separate and isolated references to her physical traits, which is a factor that leads to her being objectified and dehumanized. Instead of approaching Heer as a whole, independent person, the story tends to disintegrate the identity by exposing sensual fragment, vulnerable body, or displaying Heer as aestheticized fragment. This segmentation is indicative of larger patriarchal discourse in which the female body has been commodified and is under power. A particular example of lexical items used in the text shows this. Such key words and phrases as breasts, ankle, cheekbones, painted toes, penciled eyebrows, flat chest, foul lips, eyes, ivory skin, ruby red mouth, naked body, cleavage, and fearful eyes are used in heavily emotional and describing settings. These allusions are centered on the physicality of the female subject with a heavy accent on her attitude of sexual availability or her faculties of emotional vulnerability. Such repetition of words is part of the linguistic process whereby the female body is dismantled as disconnected visuals that can be observed or controlled by the male.

The statistical investigation agrees with the stylistic layer. A lexical table was also drawn to keep track of how many times these fragmentation related terms are used in the novel. Those words are not used randomly and are spread as one may expect in blocks, especially in scenes



involving violence, religious domination, and humiliation of gendered individuals. The recitation of the visual signs (e.g. painted toes, penciled eyebrows, ruby red mouth) strengthens the performative and objectified nature of the female body tested by patriarchal gaze. Conclusively, discourse of female in Blasphemy demonstrates that fragmentation is both a stylistic and ideological device. It echoes the manners through which the patriarchal language turns women into a thing that can be possessed and/or punished and/or enveloped with pleasure, lacking voice, agency and completeness.

#### Conclusions

The results of the present research affirm the fact that Blasphemy by Tehmina Durrani utilizes the element of fragmentation as the prevailing term of language and style in defining the female identity. Based on the concept of fragmentation introduced by Sara Mills in Feminist Stylistics, one can see that the female body is severed numerous times in the language with such words as breasts, ankle, cleavage and naked body being used as the planes of the body itself rather than individuals. This kind of description does not serve as mere decoration; it serves an ideological purpose in maintaining the objectification and subordination of women through patriarchy. The use of qualitative textual analysis, as well as quantitative lexical evidence, makes the study results more conclusive.

The loaded gender and visualization of fearful eyes, foul lips and ivory skin indicates that the text creates a de-corporalized, un-protected, and over-exposed female subject. Such speech habits can be related to the overall story of domination, force and muzzling, to which the main character is exposed, which proves that the stylistic features of the novel are closely linked with his thematic and ideological issues. This study can be used in promoting feminist literary texts in the South Asian context because it brings out the aspect of language in the construction of representations of women. It also gives a methodological paradigm to future research that may be interested in a meeting between stylistic analysis and feminist theory. The article encourages researchers and readers to understand the role of stylistical decisions as a political act in literary work and be aware of the risks of language maintenance of gender stratification.

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