

FROM MISTRESS TO MALSHAN: CATALOGUING AND GENDERED LEXICONS IN DURRNI'S BLASPHEMY

Chahat Shah Zeb

Ph.D Scholar, Lecturer at University of Science and Technology, Bannu, KP (Pakistan)

Email: ChahatShahzaib@gmail.com

Dr Sajid Anwar Chairperson

Department of English Language and Literature Gomal University DIKhan

Email: sajidanwar@gu.edu.pk

Abid Ullah

BS in English Gomal University.

Email: Abidullah2288@gmail.com

Danish Ayub,

M.Phil in English, Gomal University

Email: Danishayub9900@gmail.com

Momenah Gull

M.Phil in English from Gomal University.

Email: MomenahGull@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines how cataloguing is stylistically and ideologically used in the novel Blasphemy written by Tehmina Durrani through the theory provided by Sara Mills on Feminist Stylistics. In a mixed method that combines both the qualitative text analytical study and quantitative text, the study examines the systematic use of derogatory and demeaning language in the description of women in a manner that establishes patriarchal structures. A lexical table was created to record certain words and phrases that characterize women as belittled, objectified or dehumanized. The results show that the process of cataloguing does not only represent itself as a stylistic element, but a powerful ideological device used to establish an image of female inferiority and powerless in the story. The article supplies to feminist literary criticism because it brings out how language usage in South Asian fiction perpetuates gendered oppression and steers particular attention on the usefulness of cataloguing as a tool of the feminist stylistics analysis.

Keywords: Feminist Stylistics, Cataloguing, Tehmina Durrani, Blasphemy, Expletive Language, Patriarchal Discourse, South Asian Literature

1. Introduction

The role of women in literary works has been the topic of critical study in particular fields like literature and feminism study. Language is the most important factor both as a vehicle of expressive arts and a social construct that determines how gender and identity is perceived. Such systematisation of textual analysis of the patriarchal reinforcement or dislocation in texts achieved through stylistic preferences is the creation of feminist stylistics constituted by feminist researchers such as Sara Mills (1995): there are an array of feminist scholars who contribute to the formation of feminist approach to stylistics (see the collection of works in Marcus and Marcus 1997). Cataloguing is an important linguistic device, which is reviewed in the field of feminist stylistics because women can be degraded to a catalog of objectified and, in many cases, rather derogatory terms and thus structures established around female marginalization and disempowerment.

The novel Blasphemy (1998) by Tehmina Durrani holds an important position in the development of the South Asian literature, as it vividly describes the sufferings of women in the reign of patriarchal and religious dictatorship. Although various scholars have undertaken the study of thematic elements in Blasphemy such as accusing the church of hypocrisy and abuse of women on grounds that they are of the opposite gender, they have not focused much on how these thematic aspects have been framed using stylistic and linguistic devices. In particular, the cataloguing of Durrani allows one to pay more attention to the concept, which



ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265

JOURNAL OF APPLIED
LINGUISTICS AND
TESOL

JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL (JALT)
Vol.8.No.3 2025

demonstrates the complexity of the ideological functioning of language that objectifies

women and allows maintaining gendered hierarchies. Such stylistic aspects are important in determining how literature reflects as well as promotes societal outlook on women.

With the view of exploring the way in which the act of cataloguing functions as a stylistic and ideological mechanism regarding catalogue items, this research deploys a systematic recording and analysis of the demeaning and derogatory words and references used in *Blasphemy* to characterize female characters. Using a mixed method the study integrates qualitative textual meaning with quantitative data gathering by development of a lexical table. Such a combination of methods permits not only the interpretative perspective, but also the empirical one on the role of the catalogue in the fragmentation and objectification of women in the text. This paper aims at identifying the ways through which language does not merely show but even supports the patriarchal system of power, exalting women as secondary characters within the narrative as well as social-cultural settings.

Attention to the stylistic phenomenon of cataloguing helps this research to add to the young field of feminist stylistics besides expanding the academic discussion of South Asian literature. It indicates the significance of studying the linguistic decisions in literary works as the tools of ideology, and able to influence the perceptions of the readers in view of gender and power. Furthermore, the results of the present study are likely to be beneficial to the work of scholars, critics, and educators in the studies of the nexus between language, gender, and literature, highlighting the necessity of the critical approach to the stylistic features of the text, representing the experiences and identity of women in texts.

1.1 Research Questions

2. How does Tehmina Durrani use cataloguing as a stylistic device to describe women in *Blasphemy*?
3. What types of derogatory and demeaning words are catalogued in *Blasphemy*, and how do they contribute to constructing an image of female inferiority?

1.2 Research Objectives

2. To analyze how cataloguing is used as a stylistic device in Tehmina Durrani's *Blasphemy* to represent women and their experiences.
2. To identify and examine derogatory and demeaning words catalogued in the novel that contribute to constructing an image of female inferiority within patriarchal discourse.

1.3 Significance

The presented study is meaningful since it emphasizes the important role of cataloguing as a stylistic figure in the *Blasphemy* novel by Tehmina Durrani in terms of objectification, marginalization of women, and use of the derogatory language, hence, exhibiting the ideologies of patriarchy. The research based on the integration of qualitative and quantitative approach between the frames of the feminist stylistics gives the new approach to the South Asian literature and can be of great importance to scholars, critics, and educators who are interested in the connection between language and gender and power.

1.4 Delimitation

This paper is based on this limited scope and therefore we take the specific example of the cataloguing style used in the novel written by Tehmina Durrani and find out how the cataloguing style has been used to characterize women in derogatory and demeaning terms. It discusses other stylistic elements of the novel instead of the narrative voice or imagery that is irrelevant to the recordings in the novel. Also, the work is not expanded to critiques of Durrani and other works or even to other literature in South Asia. It is limited to determining the role of cataloguing in creating female inferiority in the text by relying on information that has only been gathered on *Blasphemy*.

2 Literature Review

Sara Mills (1995) formulation of the perspective of Feminist Stylistics is an influential framework through which the uses of the language that constructs and maintains gender identity as well as social stratification can be examined. Stylistic devices that Mills claims to be very important to imbibe patriarchal ideologies in texts include cataloguing, wherein women are carried away as lists of bodily attributes or negative elements. She states that such linguistic habits are not neutral but ideological as they build perceptions (of readers) on women and enforce gender disparities in power. It is based on this theoretical approach that this paper will be analyzing Blasphemy by Tehmina Durrani, how cataloguing is as a style as well as an ideology.

Blasphemy (1998) by Tehmina Durrani has been used with much discussion to highlight the harsh realities of the combined nature of patriarchy and religious extremism in the South Asian settings. Researchers such as Shaikh (2000) and Aziz (2002) have tried to address the thematic issues concerning gender oppression and hypocriticism in society through the novel. But as these studies are essentially studies of theme, they do not by any means give any account of technique by which such themes are expressed, as regards the specific linguistic means of expression. This study is an endeavor to fill this gap emphasizing on the catalogue element as a stylistic device giving an exact survey of women being inferior and objectified, thereby exposing the ideological underpinnings to the writings of Durrani.

The role of objectifying women using cataloguing through literary texts is also well represented by Lesley Jeffries (2007) who shows that the linguistic choice has a significant connection with propagating gendered stereotypes and power relations. Her work points out the way that when cataloguing there is the tendency to list physical characteristics or unattractive features so that women are thus simplified into some shallow descriptions. These ideas are close to the intentions of this paper in which we are going to examine the role of such similar approaches to cataloguing in the field of Blasphemy in the ideological formation of female subordination.

Socio-linguistic and discourse studies have recently become integrated with the use of stylistics as a means of finding deeper underlying ideological connotations in literature texts. In this article, Afridi and Shahzeb (2025) performed a sociolinguistic study to analyze the words created in the social stratification and identities of the South Asians through Bapsi Sidhwa The Crow Eaters work. Likewise, Naeem, Fawad, and Shahzeb (2025) dealt with the moral and spiritual implications in poetry by Wordsworth with stylistic analysis focusing on the meaning of ideological and thematic implications created by use of words. In another study, Naeem, Shahzeb and Ayub (2025) made a comparative stylistic analysis pursuing the poetic voice, nature and nationhood in the poems of Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes, and they have shown how the stylistic features help in national and cultural identity. Overall, these works prove the significance of linguistic and stylistic study in disclosing the ideological aspects of literary works as well as guide the methodological apparatus of the research in question.

Following this earlier publication Shahzeb (2025) too explored the aspect of fragmentation in the context of Blasphemy exposing the linguistic representation of women as fragmented parts of body as a factor that is used to objectify women and render them powerless. Although this study revolves around the same aspect as the fragmentation which was studied as a device, the current study places an emphasis on cataloguing as one of the most prominent devices which have been stated by Mills. The combination of these works is an idea of how the several stylistic devices of Blasphemy acted ideologically to support the patriarchal systems and exclude the identities of women. This paper aims to contribute to the residence of scholarly discussions of the way language as a creative and ideological practice functions

in South Asian literature with the help of the knowledge of feminist stylistics and past stylistic work..

3. Methodology

This study is mixed-methods in nature that will combine both qualitative and quantitative research in order to examine the linguistic patterns in Blasphemy by Tehmina Durrani. The qualitative element will include a closer textual examination in search of any datum in which the word used to catalogue characters of a female nature is employed in order to demonstrate the manner in which such a type of language is what helps to promote the patriarchal ideologies and the inferiority of women in general. This analysis is enhanced by the quantitative aspect which enumerates and measures certain words and phrases that embodies derogatory or demeaning depictions of women and gives the analysis an empirical foundation to the qualitative meanings. To give a thorough examination into the functioning of cataloguing as a style and an ideology in the text this methodological design would permit approaching the matter.

3.1 Tools for Data Collection

A lexical analysis grid is the main instrument used to collect the data and build a method of cataloguing by recording cases of cataloguing in Blasphemy. Every instance of the cataloguing was observed together with given context details like the page, the speaker, and the narrative context. This tool allowed the division of words and phrases into themes, e.g. the physical properties, moral judgment, or even emotional states, which express how women are reduced to objectified or negative labels. This data was later quantified so as to find out the frequency and the pattern of how the cataloguing was being done throughout the novel in the attempt to have an objective platform on which analysis can be made.

3.2 Sample

The present study is based on only the novel Blasphemy of Tehmina Durrani. It was considered as the text that is to be represented because of its high popularity in the South Asian feminism literature and its overwhelming nature in addressing the particular oppression of women in the patriarchal and religious systems. The whole novel was read and also analyzes in detail so as to get some comprehensive data. There are no other texts in the sample because the study is limited to the observation of cataloguing as the feature of style exclusively in Blasphemy..

3.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is positioned in the Feminist Stylistics by Sara Mills (1995) that gave prominence to the ideological choice of linguistic decisions in works of literature. Given this context, the act of cataloguing has been identified as a form of stylistic expression where women can be objectified and diminished as the items in a list of physical or moral traits assimilating the patriarchal norms and gender orders. Using the methodology of Mills, through this research, patterns of language that are observed in Blasphemy not only reflect but also reproduce structures of female marginalization. Such a theoretical view allows developing both qualitative interpretation of instances of cataloguing and structuring quantitative information so that the analysis could be done coherently.

4. Catalogues

Usually when we want to refer to any particular man or women we ask after their name which is a proper noun. We are familiar with everything by its name whether it is living or non-living. Human beings are able to tell apart various objects and use their particular names to refer to them.

Not everything and everybody comes to be named in a similar way. We even mention by appropriate use of pronouns in things without names and life but in case of women. Most of the sexist, gender-specific, negative, and offensive words we use to reference women are objectifying and do not apply to any other gender or anything lifeless either.

Citing men we positively refer to them being a positive being but when we have to mention a woman we use some degrading terminologies like call girl, prostitute, nympho, slut, brunette, redhead, blonde, and the list goes on. But we cannot have enough of such type of sexism and offensive epithets to the male sex hence this labeling of women using sexist expressions is referred to as Cataloging.

There are two kinds of catalogues as far as Derogatory and Complimentary are concerned. The free catalogues are also those that contain words and phrases, which are compliments yet come in to gratify sexual urges in males. They are applied in such a way that they address beautiful things about female body. These apparently enjoyable words act as satisfying the sexual needs of man.

On the contrary, derogatory catalogues are the ones where slangs are used to mention women. They are only used to call women either with hatred or use derogatory words.

Sara Mills retains the Cataloging handy in her Feminist Stylistics theory (1995), at Discourse level. In conducting the textual analysis of the novel chosen, the researcher has made an attempt to collect the words that fall under the section of catalog.

As the novel begins we discover that the women are also termed as a hive of bees which infested the main character Heer. Women buzzed all about me like bees. Buzzing (Durrani, 1998, p.01). So the door of the Pir Sain was opened and women rushed into the room to see whether their spiritual demigod was dead indeed. The women were chatting and whipping themselves because they lost their loved Pir Sain. There is a derogatory catalogue of the women in the beginning paragraph of the novel as the women are called as buzzing bees.

When a person is killed, the relatives turn up during the funeral and women mourn. The courtyard is inflated with women and they are staring at the sky and howl like wolves (Durrani, 1998, p.02). The latter is the same story with the haveli of Pir Sain. Women are in groups, they cry and wait with all their might in the clear sky. their lamenting, as they do so with the mouth wide open, makes them sound like wolves howling. Howling women are alluded to as howling of the wolves which is a disparaging litany.

In a male dominated society, there exist a number of slangs used to call the women and bad names that we are not able to ascertain against men. In the quote made above, Heer calls her mother-in-law Amma Sain the mistress of the haveli. What a scornful list: Amma Sain has been a long standing mistress of the haveli (Durrani, 1998, p.03). Women give birth and this is as mothers. All of the women before turning into grandmother or becoming a-mother-in-law were wives of the family and all their household chores.

A world in which old women are termed as useless bits of flesh and blood, as opposed to human beings. Heer writes that their old maid is old flesh and this is a very demeaning inventory: “ she is a crumpled piece of flesh” (Durrani, 1998, p.03). The topography of a male dominant society is such that people address women with abusive names irrespective of the age of the concerned woman.

Dai, a bent Dai, fumbled after my husband; and so near me her breath was smell of poverty a whole life long What a pity he is dead, Said he, what a pity we are dead or our way of life is dead What a pity? We did not know. They all shouted, what doom, what doom.” (Durrani, 1998, p.03)

In the novel Blasphemy (1998) there are too many or it would not perhaps be right to say that in every second woman there was no name and different catalogue was taken corresponding to each of the unnamed women. In the paragraph number one of the chapter. We get to hear

about an unnamed maid in the haveli of the Peer Sain who is spoken of by the name of Dai. She laments with a sorrowful heart thus pummel herself on the demise of the so called respected servant of God. The old Dai is a foster mother of the antagonist Peer Sain but the term Dai is not a respectable name or even proper noun but an abusive noun employed by the Pakistani society against old maids or any foster mother of a child.

This is also true of haveli of Pir Sain. It is also a common practice to call maids by their nicknames. All through the story line of the novel, we do not discover any of the real names of the maids but instead call them by their nick names. Heer is called an orphan maid by Yathimri which is a belittling catalogue that is applied to any orphan maiden: Yathimri, the orphan girl (Durrani, 1998, p.04). The habit of calling the people by their nicknames in the eastern society is too prevalent. In the majority of cases, individuals are referred by nicknames all their life. Nobody can tell much about the true names of their neighbours since they are well aware of who they actually are but their nicknames.

Their servant girl Yathimri, Heer calls her as being a feaverish girl. She was tired of her maid and used to address her with derogatory language. The fact that Heer refers to Yathimri as a fever once again confirms that she was regarded as a low individual because a fever is a deprecative catalogue, i.e., the thought of Heer spread like a favour through me (Durrani, 1998, p.04). Maids are regarded as useless and non-respectful women. The only thing all the maids need to do is serve as a slave and they also need to put up with verbal abuses.

My husband was the one who guarded Yathimri because here was an orphan who was taken to our home when she was three years old. When she was eleven, she started serving him as his personal attendant and gradually became close to him than any other person (Durrani, 1998, p.06). The excerpt indicated above catches our eyes towards one more catalogue that is the word Yathimri. Yathimri is another nameless girl of the haveli of Peer Sain who was a maid because she was only three years old. Heer the tragic heroine presents us with the orphan girl who was purchased to the haveli of her husband at the young age of three years when the poor girl became orphan. She had been named Yathimri which is a catalogue of orphan girls. Evil Yathimri lead entire lifetime of her life owing her entire life to the service of Peer Sain as an dutiful maid and a confidant sex slave. This term Yathimri is not a name but it is a derogatory term and is an offensive term applied to orphan girl in the Punjab language. Haveli of Peer Sain was a nightmare to any woman since the man only knew no kin to satisfy his urges to young girls. He was a saint, a man of god revered in the eyes of the villagers and other people whom he met and in his blood were the blood of saints but he actually proved to be worse than a monster. The case of Yathimri was not any different to that of the women of the haveli. Her services for sex were used in night or when Peer Sain wanted and the rest of the time was spent spying. Yathimri was a spy into the secrets of the Peer Sain and she would go back and tell him all that Heer had done the best of her knowledge at the haveli.

All the women followed Him including Heer and the maids because women are addressed as kites with a bad meaning: Women swaying like kites behind the master body(Durrani, 1998, p.06). When latter came the hour of the funeral rites. Amma Sain was the mother of Pir Sain and the mother Queen Heer-in-law. The last prayers of Amma Sain were made to God. The corpse of the body of master was picked up and carried to the grave.

Women have lots of catalogues in the society. They have less compliments and unlimited catalogues. Kubbi meant a hunchback woman and the old maid used to be called Kubbi. As opposed to using her own name, she was addressed in the most derogatory words; "Kubbi, the hunchback maid, comforted them" (Durrani, 1998, p.08). Grief is an aspect that all women share as their common feature. When the master died there were so many maids in

the haveli and they all shed so many tears. The loss also hurt a lot to the mother of Heer who made her daughter a widow at her twenties. None of the mothers will wish their daughters to be widows, since they have an idea of how society treat widows. Maa cried and cried, and prayed for very tears.

Ranjha the brother of Chandi professes his liking to Heer. He says she is more beautiful than the mythic Heer. Ranjha calls his and Heer imaginary couple as that of the famed Heer and Ranjha. Heer is described as beautiful and legendary beautiful; the superlative list is applied to the beauty of Heer: you are more beautiful than the real Heer. You are as spectacular as Heer is beautiful and I am your Ranjha (Durrani, 1998, p.10). Chandi reveals the picture of her older brother and gives Heer a question whether she likes this person. Chandi makes Heer meet her brother named Ranjha and her brother falls in love with Heer. Chandi desires to turn Heer to her sister-in-law by giving her into marriage to her brother.

My sister, Chitki, is thirteen years of age and she opened it and I went across the terrace to the bath room. We heard the excited calls of Chitki and of our sister, whose name was Nanni, eleven years of age, to come and assist in the tea trolley, apa (Durrani, 1998, p.11). As illustrated in the above paragraph we are informed about the siblings of Heer. Heer had 2 younger sisters who were unnamed and would be referred to in the pronoun of Chitki who was thirteen years old, second to Heer and the youngest was called Nanni who was eleven years old. The writer herself is a woman and she never provides any proper name to any female character in the entire novel except the pathetic heroin Heer.

This is indicated by the fact that these females are not named as a way of observing the value of women in Pakistani rural societies. In addition, the phrasing endowed upon the younger sisters of Heer falls within the tier of cataloguing.

Heer is a rare beauty, as pir Sain says. He tells the mother of Heer that she will not be a burden to her. Beauty is a free list which has been employed by Pir Sain to describe that of Heer: Her beauty is a rare asset (Durrani, 1998, p.13). The mother of Heer goes to visit her Pir Sain and narrates him all her problems. Pir Sain is coming to give the solution to her problems through his blessings. To a widow, her daughters are a liability.

Chandi had said to me that.

His voice rose to the shrill tones were becoming characteristic of Ma (Durrani, 1998, p.13). Heer narrates to us her brief romance with her boyhood lover and fellow school friend/classmate Chandi, brother Ranjha. Chandi intended to get Heer married to her brother but that was not what destiny had in mind about Heer. Heer received a love letter by brother of Chandi. She was hoping that He would get back to her but on the same day she was shocked to learn that the family of Peer Sain is coming to seek the hand of Heer in marriage to Peer Sain who is not less than a devil incarnate but one who had completed at least three times her age. When we read the name Chandi we get to learn that even the best friend of Heer was also classified and she was not bestowed any proper name rather The pronoun Chandi. This demonstrates that the society in which Heer used to live had no objection to referring to females using their own names but using some derogatory words.

I also could not speak and marasans sang wedding songs

they shout at the top of their voices beating a dholki as women sit on

He used to hurl money on charpais" (Durrani, 1998, p.15). Heer tells about her first day with her in-laws. On the following morning she was welcomed with open arms by her mother-in-law after her first night.law who was referred to as „Amma Sain“. Again Amma Sain is not a proper noun but she was well welcomed and all the poor women of the village willing to take to kiss hands and even touch feet of Amma Sain. Heer was expected to quietly wait when beating of drums by marasans and throwing money by women to the bride was on. Marasan

is the term which is applied to signify a woman drummer or an outcast woman. They simply left the female drummers without a name, ringing instead with the use of the obscene and negative pronouns that can be categorized as cataloguing.

He is Moti, the fat one, is cheating with his husband nephew, said. This came to the attention of her husband who beat her saying" (Durrani,1998, p.38). The head justice of the haveli was Peer Sain. His sin would be called and punished by Peer Sain very harshly without any mercy as long as he would commit the sin on his territory. Peer Sain would flog all without distinction of sex or age because of little mistakes but no one will say a word against peer Sain because of all of his faults and vices and crimes. To the notice of Peer Sain a case of adultery is purchased. He viciously thrashes the girl to make her answer who slept with him and the girl reveals that it is Moti the fat girl who is extra-maritally having a romance with his nephew. the husband of Moti discovers, whereby he beats his wife well and decides to inform her father Peer Sain to bring justice to Moti and penalize his wife. Moti is not a name rather it is an insult and it is used to call any girl who is fat or whose body is bulging, Moti is used to body shame a woman.

Not only myself, sain. sooki, the lanky girl at the tandoor assists Moti to have sex with every man in your service (Durrani, 1998, p.38). Peer Sain severely punished the girl who had been friend of the accused Moti. The girl starts saying one name after another who were engaged in adultery. She confesses to peer Sain that I am not the only girl who is close to the accused Moti but even the thin girl who assists Moti with her business with various men who are at the service of Peer Sain is also close to the accused. The term Sukki is not the name but a catalogue to model the body shame of a skinny female. All girls in the novel had no names or identifications as they were addressed by the catalogues rather than a certain name and this points out the gender disparity in society.

And they named her Kaali, as she was dark-skinned. After Amma Sain employed her as the help of the cook, she turned out to be so effective that she had to be needed in everything" (Durrani, 1998, p.39). The other catalogue we get to learn about is during the time Heer explains about the female cook in haveli. Naturally their servant-girl in the kitchen was a girl since no irrelevancy would have been permitted to enter the haveli. The girl preparing meals to them is referred to as Kaali. She is not called after her parent named her such a name but because her parents called her Kaali since her skin color is too dark that it was renamed after in Urdu and Punjabi language back-skinned. Her color is black and she is a poor servant of haveli and that is why the catalogue Kaaliself is applied to her. She was good at cooking and washing dishes in the kitchen unlike her skin. Even looking at how efficient she was when handling other cooking and chores in the kitchen, she was commended and assigned a permanent task in the kitchen by Amma Sain; the mother-in-law of the Heer.

The women made the life of Kaali more miserable after that. Their comments became violent and accusations cruel. The name kali kuttee, black bitch, was given to her by them (Durrani, 1998, p.43). The women and other people made Kali life more miserable as time went by. Piles of slangs, catalogue, abuse were levelled on her. She said nothing as she brings all the attacks on her and the accusations directed at her that includes the marks of beating on her face and the swollen eyes that indicates that indeed she is one of the victims of domestic violence. That too people intensified the process of recording and began to refer her as kaali kuttee or black bitch. Since before she was called kaali, and now people began referring to her as kali kuttee and the quotient of hatred and discrimination kept rising with each passing day.

I pulled her to me, and put her on my breast. My shirt was wet where her head was leaning. Hell was even worse in the case of Kaali. Women looked everywhere. In a moment Cheel was hovering over us. Off we rush, in a hurry, to other jobs (Durrani, 1998, p.44).

Heer desired to learn about the betrayal and the suffering that Kaali suffered. Heer desired to share the sorrows of Kaali but she could do nothing as she was not permitted to be at any close proximity to a maid in the haveli. The walls about her were filled with the spies of the Peer Sain like the Cheel. Cheel is not a name rather it is a catalogue to identify women who spy on others. Cheel bird is a Kite in English and it is an eagle like bird. The term Cheel is used to refer to a female in the Urdu and Punjabi language and has negative connotation. This obviously implies that one of other women in the novel Cheel went nameless but was recorded. Heer wished to speak to the poor oppressed Kaali and when she approached Kaali, she spotted Cheel stalking them and promptly they separated.

When I heard of a rebel in the country of Pir Sain I was surprised. The maids They used to taunt each other, very often, by the example of Tara, the shooting star. „Who DO you believe you are? Tara? one would chaff the other, and he would answer, If I was Tara, I would haev pulled out your liver And fed it to the dogs.“ Everyone wanted to act like Tara but everyone feared (Durrani, 1898, p.45).

Heer narrates to us the horrible experience of the lone rebel girl who had a nickname called, Tara. She was a small village girl who was seduced and impregnated by a small land owner of the territory of Pir Sain. The man who loved Tara off the record made her believe that he will tie the knot with her but flatly denied afterward.

As opposed to the eastern society where a woman is absolutely powerless when it comes to obtaining justice in the event of physical and sexual violence. The victim shaming of women victims of rape or any physical relation is carried on by the society. But Tara failed to live by the codes of the society and tagged along with her lover to his home to give justice to herself and her unborn child but she never got any, as it is so accustomed. Tara is not a name but a catalogue to call the girl that is mentioned in the excerpt.

When the cheap maid girl, Terhi handed me an envelope through my youngest brother-in-law, the concept (the dowries of my sister) had already vanished on my mind (Durrani, 1998, p.65). The catalogue list is continued and we have a new item, when Heer refers to a physically bent maid named as „Terhi“. Heer narrates that her younger sister is to be married and Heer was to look after the dowry of her younger sister. Dowry is the tradition in the Pakistani majority society particularly the Punjabi community where the narration takes place. The parent has to give a boy some items of livelihood in his house as a farewell gift at the wedding or in farm reality right to property of a girl is being ignored. Terhi is not a noun but a catalogue since it is utilized to refer to a physically crooked woman.

The third brother was inferior. He used to have a roaring sexual affair with his daughter who worked so behind the scenes out of her shy character that she acquired the name Meesni (Durrani, 1998,p.66). Heer is the story of other three brothers of Peer Sain. The family of peer Sain was the totally opposite of its appearance and what people imagined it to be externally. It was considered by people that the entire family was the holy and respected family of the entire world, but it was actually, corrupted with incest and perversion. His third brother shared a sexual relationship with his own daughter named Meesni. Meesni is not a name but a catalogue and this appears not to be a name that the novelist would like to call any woman in the novel.

Toti was a name I gave her and she was talking like a parrot. It is through her that I knew the real story of shrine. I knew a different story told to me by Amma Sain” (Durrani, 1998, p.71). Veerain is presented as another nameless female servant of the Peer Sain haveli, known as 'Toti'. Toti gave Heer a story the Shrine of Peer Sain. The type of history that Toti presented was different as compared to what Amma Sain had told Heer and as held by other people. Toti narrated to Heer the true history of Shrine of the Peer Sain which was as follows in the era of the British rule.

British required services of this part to remain loyal to them and they made strategies and requested their trusted relatives to use religious cards and ensure that people did not rebel against the British. The family actually possessed no lineage of blood relation to the family of the Prophet (SAW). Toti was not the name of that girl but is a catalogue that addressed the girl as a chatter box.

When Dai said to me, in a low voice, in my ear, said she? she was Budrung perhaps because she was

unusual, ugly, I almost collapsed with scare. Dai again whispered, the master only could can keep her spirit off" (Durrani, 1998, p.82). Herer is repulsed by the thoughts of Dai that the girl, who goes to see her is never a being but the ghost. Heer becomes mentally ill and becomes hallucinating. Dai tells Heer in a low voice that it is a female spirit called Badrung possessing her body and tells Heer that they named the spirit by her name, Badrung since she used to be so ugly. Even the name of the female spirit, Badrung demonstrates it because she is catalogued. Badrung is considered to be such a spirit the person can dare to hear but only Peer Sain.

Colourful glass bangles were brought by the chooriwaali to the Haveli before Eid.

It was too cheap for the maids to purchase them, not only because they were very poor, but Amma Sain never would permit them.

them to make themselves up. They lose their place, and start competing

By this she would mean, with the mistress, as he says" (Durrani, 1998, p.104).

Eids are being celebrated and the bangles-selling women known as Chooriwaali come and do their rounds, as they sell their bangles but in haveli no woman is permitted to wear bangles. The bangle sellers who are women remain anonymous but, simply referred to as chooriwali which once again is a catalogue.

The malshan stuck to his claim and said that she had brought the most correct report and the reasons are; Sakhi baba is working; his wife is praying and the son is playing (Durrani, 1998, p.132). Heer narrates the tragic tale of the single family in the town solely who never enter the jugglery of so-called Saint Pir Sain. Malshan appears and wrests that she knows the real one Sakhi Bibi and her family are tragic tell tale of a family. Malshan is not a name but a catalogue as it is a reference to the maid that provides body massage services.

Into one of the courtyards Gori walked in among a number of captive women. She would have travelled in an aircraft, I supposed from across the ocean, in air-born liberty, but beyond the ocean (Durrani, 1998, p.133). After British female had reported of visiting the haveli of Peer Sain. She only gets the name Gori not because it is her name as it is also a catalogue. People would call her a woman based on her skin colour and not her right name.

I quote it because Piyari, the whore of the city, was introduced in that way, the truth broke to be kept alive (Durrani, 1998, p.142). Pir Sain brings a prostitute with him to entertain in night which is called Pyari. Pyari is not an ordinary prostitute but all the prostitutes they get in the city are addressed as Pyari. Pyari is not a name but sarcastic pronoun which refers to prostitutes and they belong to the group of cataloguing.

Said he, Let me see, ask Kubbi. Ordering her to talk to her, he says, Tell her I order her to talk (Durrani, 1998, p.162). Heer only has a son Rajaji who lives another day insisting on marrying Maharani. A girl who happens to be a step-sister of Rajaji. Maharani is one of the daughters that Peer Sain sired out of the union with a woman who was not his wife. Rajaji then questions Kubi the crippled maid to cite reasons to his mother Heer, why his father Peer Sain will not allow him to marry Maharani. Kubi is really a slang because it is used to refer to any female who happens to be physically bent or hunchbacked which provides us with some hints of cataloguing.

Definitions The cataloguing implications used based on the work F by Sara Mills The significance of the implication of cataloguing in connection with the functions applied in the work F by Sara Millseminist Stylistics (1995) are many-faceted especially when it comes to discussion of a text such as that of Blasphemy (19980) by Tehmina Durrani. Cataloguing is a device of style that brings into attention the patterns of language used to structure and rank information as well as shed light on implicit biases and power formations contained within descriptions. In Blasphemy (1998), cataloguing contributes to the exposition of the use of individual word choices, clumping of words, and personifying of recurrent themes as the methods of creating the gendered repression and hypocrisies depicted by the narrative. Furthermore, cataloguing helps in concerting the challenging elaboration of complicated themes so that the latent configurations of power become more decipherable to both the readers and the researchers too. It can also be put forward as the illustration of the paramountity of the role of linguistic choices in the formation of perceptions, thus it can serve as a good theoretical point of departure when examining the subject of language, power, and gender in literature further on.

4.1 Numerical Segment

The researcher has summarized the numerical element of the negative words which depicts the negative representation of the women in the novel.

The table 4.1 shows the words used as “Catalogues” in Blasphemy (1998)

Word Level	The novel Blasphemy (1998)	
	Words	Number of times used in the novel
Catalogue	Mistress	06
Catalogue	Piece of flesh	01
Catalogue	Bent Dai	12
Catalogue	Yathimri	23
Catalogue	Kites	01
Catalogue	Kubbi	11
Catalogue	Marasans	03
Catalogue	Moti	03
Catalogue	Sukki	02
Catalogue	Kaali	18
Catalogue	Kali Kuttee	01
Catalogue	Cheel	05
Catalogue	Tara	03
Catalogue	Meesni	04
Catalogue	Toti	02
Catalogue	Budrung	03

Catalogue	Chooriwali	03
Catalogue	Malshan	01
Catalogue	Gori	05
Catalogue	Pyari	06
Catalogue	Seductress	04
Catalogue	Prostitute	07

5 Findings and Conclusion

The interpretation of Tehmina Durrani blasphemy shows that catalogue is an effective stylistic and ideological mark which serves to express women in degradation, objectifying, and abasing manner. After a close reading and lexical study, it was possible to find many such examples when female characters are reduced to the lists of negative descriptions, physical features, or animal images. Words and phrases like: Mistress, Piece of flesh, Seductress, and, Prostitute, are the examples that explicitly reduce the women to the agents of sexualization, commodifying them and representing the female gender as the objects of (male) desire or (moral) corruption. The use of words such as Budrung, Meesni, Toti, Chooriwali, Malshan and Kubbi can be punishing as the terms portray social disdain and moral condemnation, indicating how language becomes a controlling mechanism in disciplining how females should behave and how they should be.

Moreover, numerous listed terms in the novel are culturally bound, and such an approach needed to show how local languages and dialects are used to enforce patriarchal ideal. Naming such as of Bent Dai, Yathimri, Kaali, Kali Kuttee, Cheel, Tara, Marasans, Moti, Sukki, Gori, and Pyari exhibit how looks, complexion, and social position become the points of inventory of women which consequently separates the gender into superficial marks. These listed concepts tend to have profound social implications to the extent that the value attributed to women in society is pegged on their appeal, sexual morals or their adherence to cultural norms. High frequency repeated applications of such language throughout the novel speaks volumes on how cataloguing is not just a feature of style but also a method of ideology to uphold female subordination.

These results are also supported by the quantitative analysis which proves that some derogatory terms have been repeated significantly. The summary table of the lexical table made in the work explains the tendencies in the description of the women used, some terms took repeated occurrence in situations of humiliation, violence or sexual objectification. This redundancy makes women in the narrative even more fragmented and devalued, as it leaves a certain imprint in readers, and keeps patriarchal narrative alive. The statistics prove that the catalogue in Blasphemy is not happening randomly or solely; in fact, it is a part of the ideological structure of the novel.

Conclusions

The arguments of this study have been concluded to believe that the use of cataloguing in Blasphemy by Tehmina Durrani is a strategic intervention into her stylistic devices to portray females in a particular manner that will confirm oriental male ideologies in the book. Systemic reliance of sexist and culturally definite terms abuses, disaggregates and devalues female characters in the narrative to a confined material attribution, ethical or cultural cardinality. The novel catalogues the women as, among others, Mistress, Piece of flesh, Prostitute, Seductress, Kaali, Kali Kuttee and many more, to reveal the linguistic processes that such societies use to dehumanize women and objectify them.

As the findings point out, cataloguing in Blasphemy is not only descriptive as a tool but rather an ideological one that predicates readers on how to see and consequently feeds on the hierarchies of gender. This paper adds to feminist stylistics in that it shows that a methodical account of the process of cataloguing can indicate how the poetic language in South Asian texts has deep relativity with patriarchy social formation. It further highlights the significance of the need to critically address dominant linguistic patterns that are utilized to oppress by identifying them as some of the aspects that help in conducting future studies in the fields of feminist literary criticism, stylistics, and South Asian cultural criticism.

References

Afridi, F. H. and Shahzeb, C., 2025. Cultural lexicons: Sociolinguistic discussion of lexical divergence in Bapsi Sidhwa The Crow Eaters. *Journal of Arts and Linguistics Studies* 3(2) 26152640.

I (2002), Aziz, S. The Pakistani fiction and discussions of gender and religion. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* 19(3) 225239.

Durrani, T. (1998). Blasphemy. Vanguard Books.

Fairclough, N. (1995). Critical discourse analysis: The critical linguistics. Longman.

Jeffries, L. (2007). A feminist analysis of female body: Critical discourse analysis. Palgrave Macmillan.

S. Mills (1995). Feminist stylistics. Routledge.

Naeem A., Fawad Y., and Shahzeb C. (2025). The pedagogic voice of nature: stylistics of morality and spirituality in the poems of William Wordsworth. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT)*, 8 (2), 2126-2137.

Ayub, D., Naeem, A., and Shahzeb, C. (2025). A comparative stylistic study of poetic voice, nature and nationhood in the poems by Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT)* 8 (2): 2286 2300.

Shaikh, R. (2000). Female subjectivity and patriarchal set up in the literature of South Asia. *South Asian Literary review* 15 1 57 73.

Toolan, M. (1998). A stylistics of language in literature: An introduction. Arnold.