

Marginalization of Marginalized Women in ETAF Rum's a Woman is no Man

Rukhsana Gul¹

¹Department of English Literature, University of Lahore Pakistan

Abstract—The current study deals with marginalization of marginalized women in Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man* (2019) carried out from feminist perspective. Women from third world countries have largely been presented as an oppressed and suppressed entity as they are considered both submissive and weak at gender and biological level. However, third world women move to first world face the same problems of marginalization and oppression. They are followed by their culture proxies in the first world as well. Similarly, Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man* gives the same depiction of women. Third world women, living in first world countries have the same rights as granted to first world but they are not granted because the dominancy of their own cultural patriarchal norms. The research findings show that women are marginalized in American context on several grounds where early marriages, domestication, taking care of husband and children, giving birth to babies more particularly baby boy and if baby boy is not given birth she is humiliated and insulated. She is disgraced if she does not give birth to baby boy. Further, woman is beaten by man and she is not allowed to get education and to select her life partner. Furthermore, any kind of resistance is not granted to woman. If they try they are threatened through other women to be aware of the consequences because the major tool for women's marginalization is economic ground because women are delimited to their houses. Thus, the research showed the marginalization of marginalized women in Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man* (2019) that can be generalized to the existing literature.

Keywords—: *A Woman is no Man, Etaf Rum, Feminism, Patriarchy, Women's Marginalization.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The present study intends to analyse and interprets Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man* in the light of social feminist theory of Simon De Beauvoir. *A Woman Is No Man* is a story of marginalised female characters that are the target of men's power in a male dominated society. *A Woman is No Man* follows three generations of Palestinian women, who are already marginalized as they confront the claustrophobic expectations that continue to shape their lives. It also underpins the stereotypes of women as silent and voiceless actors only. Women are supposed to be passive, stay in domestic sphere, observer of restraint and restrictions of society and are helpless to do anything what they desire.

Marginalization is process that engulfed both men and women in the long run in different context, more importantly marginalization starts with power relationship theory by Foucault (1984) in which power is replicated through knowledge. However, he talks about that power is everywhere but the utilization of power is not granted to everyone and those who hold power, are going to marginalize the weaker. In this regard it is assumed that marginalized entities are those who are not granted basic rights or granted but not given authority to utilize the rights and they are subjected to be ordered or subjugated by the power holders or indirectly using hegemonic stances.

There is a long line of women writers who have talked about marginalization both power and bulk that includes Anita Desai (1937), Nayantara Sahgal (1927), Bharati Mukherjee (1963), Kamala Markandaya (1948), Shashi Deshpande (1938), Ruth Praver Jhabvala (1951), Mahasweta Devi (1926) and Arundhati Roy (1977). They all have contributed to the development of Indian novel in English by their inclusion of new themes and thereby given to it a new awareness of female world. Their works express the true emotions and feelings of people and these works show a perfect blending of manner, matter and form as well. These writers unveil the different social evils who continuously exploiting and ruining the lives of poor and marginalized people. These women writers show the very profound analysis of the miseries and sufferings of the miserable women of the patriarchal, conservative and cruel societies.



In this regard Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man* (2019) is explicit with marginalization of women that is further imitated to explore the marginalization of already marginalized women. The protagonist, a Palestinian girl Isra Hadid, comes to Brooklyn when her family arranges a marriage to Adam, who eventually proves to be a villain. The narrative then shifts to Deya, the oldest of their four daughters, who is left to tell her Mother's story. It is also a tale of courage of one girl Deya who bravely battles to find her voice and her own choices. But her mother Isra compels to do what her husband, Adam and her mother -in-law, Fareeda wants her to do. She becomes a victim of domestic violence and servitude. When she finds her voice, she is beaten to death. Isra is torn between her responsibilities as a conventional wife and the demands of her repressive Laws; a strain grows when Isra begins to produce children, four daughters instead of the sons she was warned about that she must carry. As the strain builds it leads to devastating tragedy.

In this study the researcher aims to explore the patriarchal beliefs about the difference between men and women and the laws and customs that govern marriage and motherhood in feminist Simon De Beauvoir. Furthermore, a woman who is already marginalized infused to more marginalization. The marginalized women are shown marginalized, leads to double marginalization of women. *A Woman Is No Man* is a story of women who are victimised because of oppression, domestic abuse, exploitation and deprivations in Palestinian culture.

1.2 Research Statement

Women in third world countries are prone to remain submissive under the clutches of patriarchy because they are endowed largely with the issues regarding 'maintaining honour of family', 'domestication' and to produce the babies especially boy. In this regard, the women feel oppression and marginalization. Despite their current positions they are more marginalized when they are found deficient in their assigned duties and then they become the victim of oppression and domestic abuse. This is called marginalization of marginalized. In this regard, Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man* seems to intake the similar marginalization of marginalized world.

1.3 Significance of Study

The current study focuses on the social challenges that women face in a male-dominated society, which further marginalizes them in third-world countries. The study will look at how patriarchal standards influenced women's gender identity, class, and race, as well as how their marginalization led to additional oppression and marginalization.

1.4 Delimitation of study

Etaf Rum, a Palestinian American writer has written her first debut novel *A Woman Is No Man*, in which she has tackled various issues having global importance. The current research is delimited to Etaf Rum's novel *A Woman Is No Man* (2019). It is further taken and explained in the perspective of social feminist theory of Simon-De-Beauvoir.

1.5 Objectives of study

- To explore patriarchal norms and labeled stereotypical representation of Women in Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man*.
- To analyze the marginalization and discrimination of women on the basis of gender, race, class and cultural constraints in *A Woman Is No Man*.
- To show the marginalization of already marginalized women in *A Woman Is No Man*.

1.6 Research Questions

The present research aims to answer the following questions:

- How patriarchal norms do, is labeling stereotypical representation of women in Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man*?
- How women are marginalized and discriminated on different grounds such as gender, racial, class and cultural taboos?
- How does Etaf illustrate the marginalization of marginalized women in her *A Woman Is No Man*?



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction and Background

From the time of Plato and Aristotle to the present day, women's writing in English literature has been documented. When a woman writes, it is assumed that she is writing about patriarchy, and the work is classified as feminist. Men's writing is usually classed in men's writing or a word like feminism is allocated since men are more accessible to the norms than women are, and their writings are categorized as either women's writing or feminists' writings. Women wrote to put their unnamed difficulties into standards and make them identifiable, according to history. Therefore, women's writing can be traced back in history since long but consciously acknowledged with emergence of feminism in eighteenth century. The writings of women have been brought into literary criticism with the emergence of feminist literary criticism in the first part of 20th century. The feminist criticism powerfully strengthened its position in the second wave of feminism as women engaged with texts to rationally understand and comprehend the practices of feminism. Second wave of feminism examines the literary movement of feminism and power of feminine to work practically. Instead of practical stances it has been observed by Dinshaw (1989) that disparity between literary epitomes and real prominence of women, making the debate fraught and acknowledges the historical continuation of women's writing to the debate. He gives references from medieval period to recognize the role of genders in textuality. Further, Helen Wilcox (1996) along with Carolyn Dinshaw (1989) promoted the pre-enlightenment of women's subjectivity in writings.

Women's writing in literature were not considered to be more important until and unless they politicized their writings. To politicize their writings, it was brought into domain of resistance against the patriarchal society in terms of demand, put in front to consider in practices as they primarily unmitigated a broad sphere of ideologies, political and social movements. Later, they pursued their personal rights, social rights, equal rights, employment opportunities, right to vote and property, and many other rights which time to time demanded by women. The ongoing struggle was made successful through literature as women started to resist to patriarchy in their writings. The movement is called feminism as formally started in writings with the work of Wollstonecraft's a "*Vindication of the rights of woman*" (1792). The work was a counter attack on patriarchy for the first time in history as Rousseau wrote "*Emile, or a treatise on Education*" (1762), politically highlights the role of a man in a society, and how man can be entertained with different privileges whereas woman is presented as a side character. Therefore, the feminism came into existence with the work of Wollstonecraft and women demanded their rights, and properly documented their writings for their rights.

2.2 Feminism and Three Waves of Feminism

Feminism dominated literary criticism in the nineteenth century, and it was able to legally attain certain aims that women had desired. With the passage of time, feminism has been strongly looking at women's lives that are somehow deficient rather than giving different rights as demanded. As a result, feminism in literary criticism has divided into three waves to strongly pursue their rights in their writings because they further questioned their rights that have been texturally given by men. The feminist movement in the West is divided into three stages, which are referred to as "waves of feminism." All of these waves are consciously dealing with various topics, challenges, and pursuing the rights of women in western patriarchal society. Every wave of feminism is distinct in its nature, with the first beginning in the late nineteenth century and ending in the early twentieth century. It covers a variety of women's rights, including women's suffrage, educational rights, the right to vote, and women's suffrage.

There are three "waves" in the history of feminist politics and theory, according to popular belief. Women's suffrage campaigns in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's are commonly associated with first-wave feminism. The focus of first-wave feminism was on legally imposed disparities between men and women, such as the legal barring of women from voting, property rights, employment, equal rights in marriage, and positions of political power and authority. Second-wave feminism is linked to the 1960s and 1970s women's liberation movements. While second-wave feminists saw themselves as inheritors of the first wave's politics, which focused primarily on legal barriers to women's rights, they began to focus on less "official" barriers to gender equality, such as sexuality, reproductive rights, women's roles and labour in the home, and patriarchal culture. Finally, third-wave feminism refers to feminist politics and activities that began in the 1980s and have continued to the present day. Many feminists believed that previous generations had over-generalized the experiences of white, middle-class, heterosexual women and ignored (or even suppressed) the perspectives of women of colour, the poor, gay, lesbian, and transgender people, and women from non-Western countries, so



third-wave feminism arose out of a critique of the second wave's politics. Third-wave feminists have criticised basic or universal concepts of womanhood, and their feminist agenda includes topics such as racism, homophobia, and Eurocentrism.

Each of three waves' aims and conflicts has affected and has been inspired by feminist social theory. Theorists like as Mary Wollstonecraft and Susan B. Anthony were prominent because they focused on how women's lack of legal rights related to their social degradation, exclusion, and misery. Betty Friedan and Andrea Dworkin, for example, were important "second-wave" theorists who focused on women's sexuality, reproduction, and the social ramifications of living in a patriarchal culture. And "third-wave" theorists such as Judith Butler and Gayatri Spivak are important for criticizing the idea of a universal experience of womanhood and bringing attention to the sexually, economically, and politically marginalized women. Furthermore, feminist social theorists in each wave have criticized the implicit male biases in social theory, assisting in the construction of a social theory that incorporates rather than excludes women's experiences.

Although feminist idea turned into in large part disregarded in mainstream social theory till the last few many years, feminist social idea has a history as long and storied as feminist actions themselves. In truth, seeing that feminist principle emerged from women's political movements, it's impossible to inform the history of feminist principle other than a record of feminism.

The history of feminist politics and concept is regularly talked of as including 3 "waves." first-wave feminism is typically associated with the girls' suffrage movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. First-wave feminism was characterized by using a focus on officially mandated inequalities between men and women, along with the criminal barring of ladies from voting, property rights, employment, identical rights in marriage, and positions of political electricity and authority. 2nd-wave feminism is related to the girls' liberation movements of the Nineteen Sixties and 1970s. Even as seeing themselves as inheritors of the politics of the primary wave which centred in general on criminal boundaries to women's rights, 2d-wave feminists commenced concentrating on much less "official" obstacles to gender equality, addressing problems like sexuality, reproductive rights, women's roles and exertions within the domestic and patriarchal subculture. Finally, what's referred to as third-wave feminism is typically associated with feminist politics and actions that began in the Eighties and continue on to these days. 1/3-wave feminism emerged out of a critique of the politics of the second one wave, as many feminists felt that in advance generations had over-generalized the experiences of white, middle-class, heterosexual girls and omitted (or even suppressed) the viewpoints of girls of shade, the poor, homosexual, lesbian, and transgender human beings, and women from the non-western world. 1/3-wave feminists have critiqued critical or regular notions of womanhood, and recognition on troubles of racism, homophobia, and eurocentrism as a part of their feminist agenda.

Social feminist theory has enthused and been encouraged via the agendas and struggles of each of these waves. "first-wave" theorists like Mary Wollstonecraft and Susan b. Anthony were influential for his or her consciousness on how girls' loss of felony rights contributed to their social demotion, exclusion, and suffering. "second-wave" theorists like Betty Friedan and Andréa Dworkin were distinguished for his or her recognition on women's sexuality, replica, and the social consequences of dwelling in a patriarchal lifestyle. And Judith Butler and Gayatri Spivak, among other "third-wave" theorists, have done a lot to deconstruct the notion of a normal female experience and to bring attention to the sexually, economically, and racially marginalised. Furthermore, feminist social theorists in each wave have critiqued the male biases implicit in social theory itself, assisting to assemble social theory that draws on as opposed to exclude the reports of girls.

2.3 Marginalization of Marginalized women in literary works

Women in the western society were treated as a second citizen as they have been deprived of those rights which were given to men. With the emergence of first wave, women got opportunities to join jobs equally with men, even they participated in wars, providing them an opportunity to pursue their civil rights as they have initiated from equality. In the first wave of feminism the most important achievement of women was right to vote because they can select their representative and largely pursue their rights in male dominated society. Further, women in Canada achieved the same goals. The important figure of the first wave was Susan Anthony (1820-1906) who introduced women's suffrage in America and played a central role in civil rights movement. She strongly put in writings that a woman can also select her partner and even refuse sex with her husband.



In her poem *I have not had one Word from Her* Sappho narrates her story of marginalization in Greek period where she relates her life with her beloved who is source of comfort and relaxation. The poem is simple in narration in which the poet is unwilling to let her beloved go. She is intensively involved in relationship with her and unable to say her good bye. The time which spent by them was unforgettable for both of them and dejectedly now parting. The appraisal words have been used by Sappho for her beloved in the poem which increases the beauty of the poem. She used references from goddess Aphrodite who is the goddess of beauty and love and their love is a gift from Aphrodite. The poem incites lesbianism because the first line of the poem "I have not had one word from her" suggests that Sappho is telling the readers about a woman and the last stanza of the poem further clarifies that both Sappho and the unknown lady has physical contact. Sappho's oppression and exploitation has been caused by her marginalization, particularly caused by patriarchy. Therefore, her stimulation towards lesbianism is the central theme of the poem. Sappho is said to be lesbian as her relation with man was caricatured and turned her relationship with a woman as noted by Ellen Greene (1996); "nevertheless, when writing in the first person, Sappho does evince a "lover's passion" toward other women and give utterance to strong homosexual feelings" (p. 132). The term lesbian was coined because of her home island Lesbos which was inspirational in this regard. The poem "I have not had one word from her" has strong relationship with the second wave of feminism as physical attachment between women was dominant. As the second wave gives birth to solidarity and sisterhood, poets like Sappho, Audre Lorde (1934–1992), and Adrienne Rich have utilised poetry to reject heterosexuality and encourage love between women. The poem rejects heterosexuality, showing interest of woman in woman where Sappho creates solidarity between women when she says "all the loveliness that we shared". In addition, the poem's last stanzas take the same technique. The poem likely second wave of feminists makes the women sexually independent not depended. Further, the poet rejects the patriarchy which is the core of all three waves of feminism. "This parting must be endured, Sappho. I go unwillingly" show here instead of their solidarity and comfort with each other they cannot join each other because it is not permitted by the norms of the society which have been formulating by man since long. Although, sisterhood and solidarity have been introduced in the second wave of feminism but still the resistance from both male and female have been reported because of their observations against these movement. Similarly, the poet wants to create environment for women that is based on solidarity and sisterhood. As the poem has been analyzed for literature review with reference to three waves of feminism and marginalization, it has been resulted that poem is largely related to the second wave of feminism and marginalization of already marginalized women is given. Therefore, she stands with her love for a woman and secondly it rejects the patriarchy which is through dominant in all three waves of feminism.

In her poem *The 5: 32* Phyllis McGinley comes with an opinion about women's marginalization. Phyllis McGinley was a poet who embraced domestication during the second wave, recounting his wonderful existence in poetry rather than facing criticism from other feminists. The poem gives the same representation of a wife waiting for her husband who returns from work. The poem consists of two stanzas in which the beauty of 5:32 has been shown because her husband approaches to home after all day. The first stanza describes the beauty in words, giving the description of the time while second stanza shows the love of a woman for her husband because the time is 5:32 PM but still she has not done her lunch and waiting for husband to do together. The line "And dinner waiting, and the sun not yet gone down" the love of a woman for her husband and how she accepts her domestication and devotion for her husband because the dinner time has passed since long but still, she says the sun is there and it is dinner time. The poem labels her house-poet as she calls herself a house-poet. Like other feminists she identified her monotony of life but she did not complain and accepts the mutual importance of both husband and wife to run the affairs of the house. According to Betty Friedan (1963) that devoted woman does not necessitate getting regards from man to be alive, is reasonably and successfully disproved by McGinley. However, despite all facts the woman is marginalized in the poem and her marginalization is resulted because of one of the important facts "imposed domestication".

In her poem *The Woman in the Ordinary* Marge Piercy comes with opinion about marginalization of women who are already marginalized by different factors as one of the factors is patriarchy. The poem is has written in the third person which is subjective in nature describing an ordinary girl that how she becomes an ordinary girl. The poet relates woman only with bodily importance in a society. However, Piercy has used diction in which she gives the own reflection as an ordinary girl. She says; "The woman in the ordinary pudgy downcast girl" but her narration about her thighs, neigs and breast relate her to power that how physically powerful she is? Further, she considers herself a young one when she says: "the girl who imitates a Christmas card virgin wit glued hands, who fish for herself in other's eyes" and next the last four lines give her a hope of



life which is long lived one. The descriptive dictions used by her that she is not an ordinary girl because of her different capabilities but she still considers herself an ordinary girl. The poem shows that a woman is deprived of her rights even they are well versed because man never allows them to be dominant. The poem highlights the issue of both first wave and second wave of feminism because women in both waves struggled for their rights, however, they achieved some their rights but still patriarchy was not ready to accept them. Further, the poem unconsciously speaks for the rights of black women as the struggle of black women started in second wave of feminism and dominant third wave of feminism. Black women have been represented with bodily description even they had intellect like white women but still they are the women in ordinary. They realize their importance but still they are ordinary of their marginalization. Further, the poem is about third world women who are already marginalized three times and they have not given by first world man, feminist and third world man. Therefore, their marginalization is more devastating and serious.

In her poem *Woman Work* Maya Angelou depicts the marginalization of already marginalized women. The title of the poem suggests that it is about the work of women. Maya Angelou gives the depiction of domestication of women in the poem. The first stanza gives the depiction of different works of a woman which are liable to be completed by her. She tells the readers that how a woman fulfils her work in house. As a house wife she has to perform different duties like prepare foods for husband and children, taking care of children, feeding her animals, pressing clothes and other works. This domestication is the daily routine of woman life which has dulled her life. The next stanzas tell the reader about the comfort and relief which takes her to nature from domestication. The narration of sky, mountains and cold ice give relief and comfort to her body and soul, get ready for the next work. The poem covers all three waves of feminism where the domestication of women has been questioned but the poem largely deals with ecofeminism which was dominant in third wave of feminism. The ecofeminism as academic movement sees at the exploitation of women and domination of nature. The poem represents the ideology of ecofeminists, who advocate for women to be free of domestication and to go to nature for comfort and solace. Therefore, ecofeminism initiated by the author is a mode to get ride off marginalization of patriarchy and domestication.

In her poem *Aunt Jennifer's Tigers* Adrienne Rich narrates about marginalization of women. The poem is about artistic skill of a woman who is knitting an Aunt Jennifer is knitting a panel making a tiger on green landscape which is symbolically used for man. The image of the tiger is compared with the living life. Further, "They don't fear the men beneath the tree" shows the relationship of aunts with a man who is her husband. "Find even the ivory needle hard to pull" deals with the burden of her life which has been put on my man which is shown miserable when the poet says "Massive weight". The last stanza shows that Aunt is unhappy and her life has become miserable after her marriage and the image of the tiger suggests in the poem that she would be kept miserable, oppressed, tremble and defeated after her husband death. The poem is somehow similar to kill angel in house as suggested by Woolf because women has artistic skills but man does not allow to create and they are allowed still they are under the domination of man. The poem is validated for three waves of feminism where the man is shown responsible for women exploitation even, they could write, create or compete man. Women who obeyed man, survived and capable to live a life under the superiority of men, though, women achieved their rights but largely they see man as Aunt Jennifer's Tigers. However, the writer wants to get ride of marginalization.

The section shows those feminists' issues as highlighted in this research. The study focuses on marginalization of marginalized women that is responded by feminism as the movement lesbian was came into practice with radical feminism in the second wave of feminism but unconsciously given by Sappho in seven century BC, showing that women's writing largely intersect in different issues. Literature however as I have discussed as a subjective tool, does not concentrate on objective aspects of the society largely, if we take women's literature which has a different taste because the focused centre that is domestication. Accordingly, the selected works presents largely subjective aspects, dealing with women's rights, education, emancipation, suppression, eraser and other issues which have caused by men and a step towards the elimination of marginalization of marginalized women.

3. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current chapter deals with research methodology and theoretical frame work of the research. The chapter is important because research methodology is a highly intellectual activity, showing different methods



and parameters of how data is collected and analysed. Research Methodology has a dire need in any research project and dissertation that has been described by P. Sam Daniel in his book *Research Methodology* that;

“Methodology is the procedure of research technique. It is the logic of scientific investigation. It is not a research model employed in a particular project but is a technique which entails theoretical principles as well as a framework that provide guidelines about how research is done in the context of a particular paradigm. It translates the principles of a paradigm into research language and shows how the society can be explained and studied (2011: p. 41)”

Further, the chapter shows the nature and type of the research and more importantly providing the theoretical discussion for the selected topic under specific lens that supports the argument of the researcher.

3.1 Research Methodology

The researcher employed the qualitative research approach in this study and relied on the text of *A Woman Is No Man* as a major source of data. The accessible literary pieces, reviews and commentaries published in national and worldwide generalists, as well as articles about the chosen issue, were used as secondary sources to support and comprehend the study findings. Close reading and textual analysis are used in this study. The research arguments claims will be used and assessed using textual analysis or evidence and relevant passages to investigate the principles of Simon-De- Beauvoir's social feminist theory and similar theories. The current research intakes close textual analysis as a research method that provides the close reading of the selected text.

3.2 Theoretical framework

Simon De Beauvoir as a theorist is dominant figure, who is a French writer, intellectual, existentialist philosopher, and political activist, feminist and social theorist. Her main ideas are discussed in her book *The Second Sex*, written in 1949, that man who views himself as an essential being, has made a woman the inessential being “the other”. She explains: “Man is defined as a human being and woman as female -whenever she behaves as a human being, she is said to imitate the male” (Beauvoir, 1949). She explores the ways that how masculine ideology exploits the sexual difference to create system of inequality. She identifies the sex-gender distinction. Her most famous lines “One is not born woman, one becomes one” refers the idea that women are programmed socially and culturally to be submissive and act as a passive. She writes: “No one is more arrogant towards woman, more aggressive or scornful than the man who is anxious about his virility.” (Beauvoir.1949, *the Second Sex*)

According to her, a girl is taught to be a woman and her feminine destiny is imposed on her by patriarchal society and she imperiously modifies her consciousness of herself and accepts her so called femininity because of cultural and societal programming. Beauvoir thinks that marriage sucks all the energy of female and almost destroys her personal freedom of thought or act. She discusses “What makes the lot of the wife servant ungratifying is the division of labour that dooms her wholly to the general and inessential”. (Beauvoir, 1949) She writes that a woman only achieves her dignity in society and in family when she accepts vassalage which is bed service and house work service. Beauvoir said: “the roles we associate with women are not given to them in birth, by virtue of their biology, but rather are socially constructed. Women are taught what they're supposed to be in life, what kind of roles they can or can't perform in virtue of being of "the second sex". (The second sex, 1949)

Tyson mentions in his book *Critical Theory Today* with the reference of Beauvoir that Beauvoir maintains that women should not be content with investing the meaning of lives in their husband and son, as patriarchy encourages to do. Beauvoir claims women are trying to escape their own freedom to fulfil their own potential in the world, a freedom that they try to avoid because it is frightening: it demands personal responsibility while offering no guarantee of success or even of well-being. “If woman seems to be the inessential [being] which never becomes essential”, she suggests, “it is because she herself fails to bring about this change”. (Tyson, p.97)

In her second volume of the second sex deals with the many different roles a woman can play in society and the ways in which different woman react to their positions, and how the modern woman is beginning to reinforce or challenge their rights. She describes how the independent woman of modern world still faces



greater challenges than man does face because of traditional values regarding marriage, reproduction and femininity.

Judith Butler, a feminist philosopher and gender theorist, argues in her book *Gender Trouble* that both sex and gender are culturally constructed, as opposed to the common thought of sex being a biological matter. She argues that “When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating article, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one” (6). So, Butler reasons that the term “sex” is not essentially a fact but instead something that is socially constructed. The reflection of masculine and feminine is something I will consider when studying the novels.

4. Marginalization of Marginalized women in Etaf Rum’s *A Woman Is No Man*

The novel as discussed in chapter one, gives the narration of three generation of Women living in America. The novel relates the stories of Palestinian women who are living in America and are still inflicted with patriarchy and male’s fantasies. Despite the fact the nature of novel is more productive and factual when an emancipated movement ran in America, gave equal rights to women and that global platform submitted the rights of women for entire universal itself is deficient to provide basic rights to immigrants women and stands against their patriarchal norms and social taboos. However, the novel *A Woman Is No Man* (2019) is somehow autobiographical narration of Etaf Rum who faced severe criticism, hatred and moved to queue of exploitation and suffering. The identical description of Etaf Rum’s life is given in *A Woman Is No Man*. The two important characters Isra and Deya, mother and daughter become the victim of male’s fanatics where the key role is played by Isra’s mother-in-law and grandmother of Deya; Fareeda. Three women are reflected three generation of Palestinian women, living in America.

In the prologue of the novel Deya the main character of the novel relates her life story when she opens her eyes in the city of Brooklyn. The pathetic condition is reflected in the given lines about her life and family while living in Brooklyn

“I was born without a voice, voicelessness is the condition of my gender, as normal as the bosoms on a woman’s chest, as necessary as the next generation growing inside her belly. Where I come from, we’ve learned to conceal our condition. We’ve been taught to silence ourselves that our silence will save us. It is only now, many years later, that I know this to be false.” (Rum, p.5)

The lines very clearly show the importance of patriarchal society that is imposed on those women as well who are living in the first world and track their activities. Keeping in consideration the male’s fantasies of native culture women consider them marginalized. However, the stance is contemplated by Isra that her marginalization is twice marginalization because a country like America which granted equal rights to women and the community spending their two generation who are now the true residuals of Palestinian culture but their affiliation with America granted them nationality and all those facilities which are bestowed to other American. Further, the lines show very clearly that silenced voices need to remain silence because if these voices are raised then they will be more silenced. In accordance with the stance of marginalization women remain more marginalized. Simon De Beauvoir’s (1949) stance of presenting woman a social entity despite her is not born woman but made a woman. Further, the lines are important because the narrator, Isra explains the helplessness and powerlessness of women in society where the voice of women are dumb and are pushed by the Patriarchal norms, where women are taught to be submissive and passive to endure pains and sufferings silently but in the long run they ultimately know the truth that they can resist and change their destiny and can get their individuality and freedom of thought, speak and act and are learned to conceal that they are beaten, tortured and victimised by men.

The narrator also highlights her agnatic position, thus, not explicit but in the first phase of the novel she puts herself and her community’s women for trials to think about their marginalization and how they are put forward for more marginalization. The very lines are also identical to Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak” (1988) where women are shown marginalized entity who are unable to raise their voices. Spivak also of the opinion that women are oppressed and marginalized are further marginalized by patriarchal norms.

“She remembered once telling Mama that she couldn’t find any fruit on the mulberry trees when in fact she had spent the afternoon reading in the graveyard. Yacob had beaten her twice that night, punishment for her defiance. He’d called her a sharmouta, a whore. He’d said he’d show her what happened to disobedient girls, then he’d shoved her against the wall and whipped her with his belt. The room had gone white. Everything had looked flat. She’d closed her eyes until she’d gone numb, until she couldn’t move.” (Rum, p.10)

Isra faced physical violence in the novel that is a kind of marginalization, observed by Orientalists in their travels to Afghanistan, noted in their writings. *The Taliban’s War On Women A Health and Human Rights Crisis in Afghanistan* (1998) is a complete book gives the description of women who were beaten by Women. The similar description of Etaf Rum’s novel shows that third world women either living in America or somewhere in any part of colonized/postcolonial part are liable to such behaviour of man. In the first stage of the novel Isra does not want to raise her voice is kind of marginalization which is imposed on her by her society while in second phase that shows her beaten body is further marginalized position. It shows that how a marginalized woman is further marginalized. Simon De Beauvoir (1949) in her book narrates the description of patriarchal societies where women are set to be programmed from the early childhood, are restricted to do every single thing what challenges and frightens the male virility. So, that is why Isra’s father is proved to be tyrannical on girl because he wants complete obedience from her as well. The earlier she learns, the better for her, because then this girl will grow up to be the perfect inferior beings, just as the way the patriarchal society wants her to be.

“Mama glared at her through the steam. “What about it?” “I’ve always wanted to fall in love.”

“Fall in love? What are you saying? Did I raise a sharmouta?”

“No . . . no . . .” Isra hesitated. “But what if the suitor and I don’t love each other?”

“Love each other? What does love have to do with marriage? You think your father and I love each other?”

Isra’s eyes shifted to the ground. “I thought you must, a little.”

Mama sighed. “Soon you’ll learn that there’s no room for love in a woman’s life. There’s only one thing you’ll need, and that’s sabr, patience.” (Rum, p.15)

These lines very clearly show that third world woman has no right to raise her voice or even to keep her rights for perusal as Isra’s mother orders to marry your husband and give off the idea love. Etaf Rum shows that postcolonial woman has no option for love marriage or to get engaged with anyone in love and romance but she has to spend her entire life on the mercy of man. The stance of Etaf Rum is identical with Rousseau’ *Emile on or Education* (1769) who clearly stated about the same position of woman as depicted by Rum Etaf in her novel. Lacan also incorporated women in identical way (1968; 1970) where women have been shown submissive and subordinated to man.

“He leaned closer. Slowly, he spread her legs apart. Then he dabbed a rag against her split flesh. He cleared his throat. “I’m sorry,” he said. “But I have to.”

Lying there, trembling, Isra thought of Fareeda. She imagined her creeping down to the bathroom earlier that day, smiling slyly as she placed a bundle of fresh cloth in the cabinet for her son to use. It was clear to Isra what Adam was doing: he was collecting evidence.” (Rum, p. 18)

Etaf Rum shows her the influence of patriarchy on women that how they are inflicted with all orders and domestication, imposed by men. They very idea of patriarchy is initiated in such cases by Coventry Patmore’s *The Angel in the House* (1891) is a productive book which incorporated women to be submissive to men and limited to their houses. Woman is reflected as an angel in the house. Patmore’s stance is similar to Etaf Rum’s characters that are inflicted to their houses and liable to follow their men. Isra in this regard follows her husband and does not keep him into questions because the patriarchal norms are opposing women despite if anything

wrong is done by women. Suppose a woman, found in adultery is either killed or she is forced to leave the family but a man is entirely exempted from the practice as Etaf Rum noted;

“She knew he must have slept with other women before marriage. Even though the Qur’an forbade the act for both genders, Mama said that men committed zina all the time, that they couldn’t help themselves.” (Rum, p.19)

Man, according to Etaf Rum has complete freedom but woman is restricted to social taboos and patriarchal norms. Her marginalized position does not allow her to do anything that goes against the norms, set out by man. Even, resistance in practices and words is observed, then, marginalized woman is pushed to more marginalization. However, apart from marginalization of woman Etaf Rum also highlights the double standard of the society. Etaf Rum highlights the double standard of man in a society that he always needs a virgin girl, although, he has many illicit relationships with other women but collects evidences about his wife’s virginity to prove it to others only for the satisfaction of his ego. It is a good example of exploitation, cruelty, brutality and oppression that a woman has to justify herself, not just before her husband but before society as well. Etaf Rum’s objection is actually to question’s male’s virginity who himself is looking to prove the virginity of a woman whereas his virginity himself has never been question despite he engages with illicit relationship with so many girls. Etaf Rum’s envisaged virginity a dominant factor in third world country that keeps women oppressed and marginalized where women are already marginalized through different practices. Etaf Rum’s stance is supported by Mieke Bai’s “Virginity: Toward a Feminist Philology” (noted in *Disposition*; 1987). Mieke Bai also questions male’s virginity despite the fact man is searching for evidences to prove women’s virginity.

“That’s the life of a woman, you know. Running around taking orders.”

Isra pushed aside a pair of mint-green boxers and leaned closer to Fareeda.

“Is that what you do all day?”

“Like clockwork,” Fareeda said, shaking her head. “Sometimes I wish I could’ve been born a man, just to see how it feels. It would’ve spared me a lot of grief in life.” Men huff and puff about all the work they do to support their families. But they don’t know—” She paused. “They have no idea what it means to be a woman in this world.” (Rum, p.62)

However, Etaf Rum also accepts through her characters that patriarchal orders are seriously to be followed whereas previously she did not acknowledge the reason but her she clearly noted that man is powerful because she earns money for woman and woman in counter to be remained submissive to man. Etaf Rum once against confirms with Coventry Patmore’s *The Angel in the House* (1891) that woman is for sure entitled to bears all domestication and all those duties which are assigned by men because the man is the caretaker and he has to earn for money. Therefore, she is for sure an angel of the house where Etaf Rum considers the same practices a kind of marginalization for women. She stands with Virginia Woolf’s “A Room of One’s Own” (1928) that has been delivered in a form of lecture, demanding women’s emancipation on economic grounds. According to her women are largely oppressed on economic ground because they have to carry out all their lives on economic bondages which are controlled and provided by men and rejection to men’s norms lead them deprivation of certain rights. Tyson in this regard comes with opinion who mentions a thinker Christine Delphy in his book *Critical Theory Today* that is influenced by Beauvoir who focuses her analysis on the family as economical unit which is run by male. For her marriage is a labour contract that ties women to unpaid domestic labour, commonly trivialized as “housework” not considered important enough to be seriously analyzed as a topic, or a problem in its own right. Fareeda pathetically describes the lives of ladies which are grinded under the wheel of patriarchy that they run and take orders throughout the day but still, considered inferior then men because domestic services and child rearing are unpaid and consequently have no value.

In taking a more powerless image of the woman in novel Etaf Rum also presents the image of Isra a burden for society as her husband in a discussion narrates the similar words and identify that;

“Not now, Mother,” Adam said. He passed Isra an apologetic look. “What?” Fareeda said. “It’s true. As if we need another balwa, as if we don’t have enough troubles.”

Isra felt a jolt at the word. She could almost hear Mama’s voice ringing in her ears. Mama had often called Isra a balwa—a dilemma, a burden.” (Rum, p.87)



However, woman is represented as burden for society but Simon De Beauvoir (1949) and many other critics and theorists of feminism do not bother to undermine the fact that woman is the part of society, however, in very larger background women are represented and depicted as powerless, submissive and the subordinate part of man's life because in counter man is powerful, strong and the entire system of economic belongs to him. Therefore, woman has to entertain the man as *Emile or On Education* (1769) has represented the image of woman to entertain the imaginative character Emile because Emile is powerful and has the capacity to earn money and take care of the family. However, Rum entirely represents a bleak image and picture of women's humiliation and disparagement in her book *A Woman Is No Man*. She highlights that women are regarded as a burden even in modern today world. The protagonist, Isra bears four daughters and she considers them a blessing but she is always tormented and tortured by her husband and law's for having daughters.

In accordance with the context of baby boys if a woman fails time and again, she faces huge criticism, even her husband starts her hating that is another kind of marginalization, causing psychological trauma for woman and she passed through functional diseases which are very serious than the biological illness. Woman engulfed by the psychological disease are unable to continue reproductive process effectively and becomes the victim of anxiety and depression. The already marginalized woman becomes more marginalized as the novel has different examples which are given below;

What if Allah had made her pregnant again so soon in order to give her a son? Maybe a son would make Adam love her. She closed her eyes and recited another prayer, asking God to grow love in Adam's heart. (Rum, p.101)

The exploitation and suffering of women continue in the entire scenes of the novel through different characters, although, they want to resist but they cannot pretend to do because the protagonist of the novel knows if they call police, their men will be sent to jail. It is fact that American law considers exploitation and suffering of women an unlawful that is liable to court trials and punishment but Isra avoids, knowing the consequences as noted by Etaf Rum; "Isra kept her gaze averted. "Husbands beat their wives all the time back home. If a woman called the cops every time her husband beat her, all our men would be in jail." (Rum, p.146)

Here we see the bitter reality of the world that husbands are habitual to beat their wives in practiced cultural and if wives contact with law then all men will be arrested. Although domestic violence is a crime but in typical societies it is allowed and everything is considered fair in the case of man. Etaf Rum moves from injustices to physical violence that is also not challenged either itself by patriarchal society nor the woman and solemnly accepted the practices because the consequences for women are factual, resulting to harm them rather to affect man because the entire economic structure is controlled by men and women are only titular bodies and commodities for men.

"Since Adam had beaten her to a pulp over the girls' schooling, she had become increasingly afraid for her daughters and their futures. She wished she had listened to Sarah and found the courage to go with her. But she had no time to waste on such thinking now. She had to save her daughters. They had to leave". (Rum, p.246)

The marginalization of already marginalized women reached to peak in the novel and Isra finally thinks to intake a position that is productive for her children. Finally, Isra takes initiative to save her daughters although she is tamed to be timid, voiceless and harmless, she has no voice to speak even against the cruelties and violence of her husband who beats her and tortures her but at last she finds courage to save her daughters from the savagery of their father and decides to leave. Etaf Rum presents Isra a powerful character and her courage is infused also in her daughter Deya who finally initiated her mission to raise voice for women and give them an emancipated position in the society.

"Do you remember the last time you saw your parents?"

Deya considered. "I think so. I'm not sure."

"What do you remember?"

She felt the enormity of the memory on her tongue, words she had never said aloud. "They took us to the park. That's the last thing I remember."

"Tell me what happened," Sarah said.



At the end of the tunnel When the train stopped in front of them, the doors opened, and there stood Adam. He rushed over to them, wrapping her in his arms. Then they went to the park, all six of them, a family.

“So Adam met you all in the subway and took you to the park?” Sarah asked.

Yes.” (Rum, p.167)

Deya explains to her aunt Sara what she has remembered about her parents when she has seen them last time before their death. She tells her that her mother took them to the train station where their father was stood when the door of train opened and he took them all to the park. Sara’s investigating manners hints towards the tragic end of Isra;

“Deya shouted. “How can you expect me to understand something like this? None of it makes any sense. Why would he kill her -murder the mother of his children, his wife?”

“He just—he just . . . he lost control.”

“Oh, so you thought it was okay that he beat her? Why didn’t you do something?”

“What was I supposed to do? It’s not like I could’ve stopped him!”

“You could’ve stopped him if you wanted to!” Fareeda opened her mouth, but Deya cut her off. “Why did he kill her? Tell me what happened!”

“Nothing happened,” Fareeda lied. “He was drunk, completely out of his mind. That night, I heard him screaming from upstairs. I found him on the floor, shaking beside your mother’s body. I was terrified. I begged him to leave before the police came. I told him to pack his bags and run, that I would take care of you all. But he just looked at me. I don’t even know that he could hear me. And the next thing I knew, the police were at my door, saying they’d found my son’s body in the river.”

“You tried to cover for him?” Deya said in disbelief. “How could you cover for him? What’s wrong with you?”

Fareeda chided herself—she had said too much. Deya was staring at her in horror. She could see pain in her granddaughter’s eyes.

“How could you cover for him after he killed our mother?” Deya said. “How could you take his side?”

“I did what any mother would’ve done.”

Deya shook her head in disgust.”(Rum,p.197)

Sara hands over Deya an advertisement in which the tale of Isra’s death has been written and after inquiring about it from Fareeda, she reveals the harsh and tragic end of Isra to her daughter Deya as well as gives details about the death of her father. Fareeda feels herself guilty to steal the truth from her granddaughters over the years. Isra was beaten to death by Adam because of her attempt to escape and to save her daughters future. And in her attempt, she is defeated by death but her wish for the bright futures of her daughters has been fulfilled.

To sum up the section of the research it has been reported and provided stories of different women who are equally oppressed and marginalized. The novel confirms that already marginalized women have been further marginalized by patriarchal society and its practices, even some of women have been selected by men to dictate other women. Dictation to women through other women is more productive for men and threatening for women because woman life Fareeda also narrates her story of exploitation and suffering and negation to man’s orders is no more a death certificate for them. However, the major factor that is also observed in the novel is economic disparity in the Palestine society whether the people are living in Palestine or in America they are equally responsible for oppression of women and the entire economic system is controlled by them. Therefore, women like Isra, Fareeda, Deya and Sara become the victim of man’s web of economic disparity.

4. CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

4.1 Conclusion

Hence, images of Palestinian-American women and the restrictions that govern them in the patriarchal community are clearly depicted. Females are clearly seen as inferior and other in the substructures of traditional Palestinian society, as evidenced by a close examination of the female characters. The inferiority of women is defined as a natural concept and it is reinforced through the male interpretation of rules and norms socially, ideologically male dominated cultural construct. The rules that are accepted as norms for perfect womanhood are in contrast with the reality of women’s individuality. The marginalization of women is a significant



characteristic of the patriarchal lifestyle. Women are programmed and trapped psychologically from childhood to maturity in patriarchal system, so women choose to endure the social, familial, political, cultural and religious restrictions and domestic violence, sexual abuse, domestic labour and are victimised, Oppressed, tortured and exploited by male dominated society.

A Woman Is No Man is a heartbreaking narrative of what happens when a woman in a patriarchal culture is denied the right to make her own decisions and take charge of her own life. It's about feeling trapped by marriage, law, religion, and society's limitations. It's about a lady who only wants to be herself and battles for her daughter's identity and individuality, making decisions for her children's sake, but her husband has stolen the string of life from her grasp. Women are subjected to a complicated system of oppression, and they are ill-equipped to argue or fight back against the injustices that are perpetrated against them. Beauvoir says that a woman's wings are cut and then she is blamed for not knowing how to fly. It is also a tale of those courageous women who challenge the cultural practices which sustain the system of patriarchy and pave the way for generations who will come. The author, Etaf Rum suggests that if we educate our women, we give them power over their lives and over themselves. And if we allow them this power, they are not going to put up with the injustices committed against them.

The researcher highlighted the issue of disadvantaged women in Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man*, who are represented as subservient and weak entities when analysed from multiple perspectives. The study went on to examine the novel from many angles, employing close textual analysis as a research method, employing qualitative methodology, and addressing feminist and postcolonial feminist critique to bring attention to women's issues.. Both first world feminists and third world feminists have presented their theoretical perspectives to address the marginalization of women and further expedited how women resisted against patriarchy.

Using Simon De Beauvoir's theoretical background of feminism in which she gave the idea of feminism in which she challenges the patriarchal norms through the basic idea of gender and sex. According to her that a woman is not born a woman but she is made a woman. Other factors are also important that delineates the problems of women living in a patriarchal society. Other theorists and literary critics like Spivake, Alice Walker and many others from both first world and third world have developed their view points to resist patriarchy and highlight the marginalization of women. To understand and comprehend the basic arguments of patriarchy and feminism the current research endorses the view points and the analyses are productive and related to the said stand point.

A Woman Is No Man as analysed in the current research provided productive discussion and views points those can be added to literary criticism and more importantly a strong support of feminist theory and criticism. The novel *A Woman is no Man* is based on women marginalization that is already marginalized. The title of the novel itself is factual and signifying the importance of women problems. The statement *A Woman Is No Man* is beautifully documented that a woman despite her guardian who is either father or husband is left still homeless because she is only a commodity for man as she is to take care of her children and domestication. Further, she is forced for marriages in early ages and even she is not granted the right to get education. The main reason for highlighting this practice to show the world that how a Palestine woman is kept irrational to not challenge the patriarchal norms. After getting education, the women will be become rational and for certain the patriarchal norms and practices will be questions. Etaf Rum highlights and shows the love of Deya and Sara for education is the similar practice that will eliminate patriarchy. Further, the rejection of marriages also is one of the key objectives of Etaf Rum to challenge patriarchy but what happened with them they are not given the right for education and finally they have to submit what has been bestowed by man.

4.2 Findings

As indicated in the analysis and conclusion, women in Palestine society are already marginalized due to many practices, as evidenced by the current research as an intake for marginalization of marginalized women in Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man*. The novel resulted that Etaf Rum's personal life was also the part of similar marginalization and we can say that her already marginalized position was more marginalized in real life and her personal life has influenced the novel in which she shows the marginalization of already marginalized women, more importantly Isra, Fareeda, Sara and Deya are prominent. Though, it is probable that in taking marginalization of women in the novel is reported because of real life consequence to forefront to universal

cannon. It is resulted after the analysis of the novel that women of Palestine society are marginalized and they are marginalized despite their marginalized position.

5. References list

- [1] Agosín, M., & Franzen, C. (Eds.). (1987). *The Renewal of the Vision: Voices of Latin American Women Poets, 1940-1980*. Spectacular Diseases.
- [2] Bal, M. (1987). *Virginity: toward a feminist philology*. *Dispositio*, 12(30/32), 65-82.
- [3] Barnard, M. (1986). trans. *Sappho A New Translation*. California: University of California Press. Print.
- [4] De Beauvoir, S. (1949) *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage, Print.
- [5] Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- [6] Kizer, C. (2002). *Cool, Calm, and Collected: Poems 1960-2000*. Copper Canyon Press.
- [7] Lowenstein, C. (1994) (ed.). *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou*. USA: Library of Congress Cataloguing.153-154.
- [8] Lacan, J., & Fink, B. (2006). *Ecrits: The first complete edition in English*. WW Norton & Company.
- [9] Levertov, D. (1983). *Poems of Denise Levertov, 1960-1967*. New Directions Publishing.
- [10] McGinley, P. (1951). *A Short Walk from the Station*. Viking Press.
- [11] McGinley, P. (1961). (Foreword) Auden ,W.H.. *Times Three Selected Verse from Three Decades with Seventy New Poems*. New York: Viking Press.
- [12] Patmore, C. (2014) *The Angel in the House*. Ed, Morley, H. London: Cassell & Company.
- [13] Piercy, M. (1936 March 31) "The Woman in the Ordinary." *Poem Hunter*. Web.
- [14] Rousseau, J-J. (1762), *Emile ou De l'education in Oeuvres*. (vol .4). 239-868
- [15] Bloom, A., & Rousseau, J. J. (1979). *Emile, or on Education*. New York: Basic.
- [16] Rowbotham, S. (2011). *Dreamers of a new day: Women who invented the twentieth century*. Verso Books.
- [17] Rum, E. (2019). *A Woman is No Man*. London: Harper Collins.
- [18] Spivak, G. (1978). *Feminism and critical theory*. *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, 1(3), 241-246.
- [19] Starhawk, S. D. (1979). *A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*.
- [20] Showalter, E. (1999). *A literature of their own: British women novelists from Brontë to Lessing*. Princeton University Press.
- [21] Tyson, L. (2014). *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide*. Routledge.
- [22] Walker, A. (2004). *In search of our mothers' gardens: Womanist prose*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- [23] Wilcox, H. (Ed.). (1996). *Women and literature in Britain, 1500-1700*. Cambridge University Press.
- [24] Wollstonecraft, M. (1792). *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. ed. Warnock, M. London & Melbourne: J. M. Dent.
- [25] Wollstonecraft, Mary. (1792). *A Vindication of the rights of Woman*. London

