

## Sexuality Immersed in Ecocriticism – A Critical Examination of Zaibunissa Hamidullah’s “The Bull and the She-Devil”

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### Abstract

*The aim of the research is to explore the dynamics of sexual tension persistent between and inhibiting the unification of Ghulam Qadir and Shirin. The objective of the study is attained by unearthing sensuality by dint of a symbiotic relationship of nature and libidinal desires. Furthermore, Qadir’s proclivity for sadistic machismo renders the culmination of pleasure in pain, akin to the zenith in BDSM. The persisting research is imperative as Hamidullah’s work has not been hitherto studied as a subtle manifestation of BDSM; that too through the natural environ.*

*The primary tool for the critical study is Zaibunissa Hamidullah’s short story “The Bull and the She-Devil” from her collection “The Young Wife and Other Stories”. Cheryll Glotfelty’s theory of Ecocriticism and the fundamentals of BDSM form the secondary tools. Future researchers can navigate the tropes of South Asian folk tradition in the short story. It is a qualitative and non-inter-disciplinary research.*

**Keywords:** Pakistani fiction, Ecocriticism, Sexual desire, BDSM, Punjabi Machismo, Algolagnia.

The aim of the critical study is to scrutinize the influence of nature and mirror Qadir’s psychosexual turmoil via his geographical space in Zaibunissa Hamidullah’s short story “The Bull and the She-Devil”. Cheryll Glotfelty’s theory on Ecocriticism and a bone of contention in the domain of sexuality, BDSM, is employed as the theoretical framework. The researcher manifests the objective by dint of affirming a symbiotic relation betwixt the natural landscape of rural Punjab and the male psychosexual sphere. Consequently, nature is analyzed as a reflection of the male protagonist’s subjective space. Furthermore, his desire to overpower Shirin is construed not merely as a patriarchal norm but the study infers it to be an emblem of a latent Dom(inant) residing within him who relishes sadism. Nevertheless, the research paper incorporates Algolagnia as a self-annihilating force in the endeavor to seek libidinal pleasure.

Zaibunissa Hamidullah is a Pakistani-Bengali writer whose pen lent excellence to the canvas of Pakistani writing in English, especially in the 1950s. Hamidullah’s work manifests the first traces of feminist literature in Pakistani fiction. By dint of her flourishing role as a journalist, she often unsheathes the foibles of the socio-political norms. “During this era, some writers had started agreeing with the prescriptive dictum that their work has a lofty purpose, namely to “serve the society” (Azam “Pakistani Literature in English” 5). This propagandist and progressive view of literature became popular in 1950s with special emphasis on didactic literature” (5). Her love marriage to Khalifa Muhammad Hamidullah proved to be fodder for her literary prowess as she was not only physically displaced from Bengal to Punjab, but also endured a cultural shock. Consequently, “her later writing was affected by her trips to rural areas of Bengal and the Punjab...” (“Zaib-un-Nissa Hamidullah”).

“The Bull and the She-Devil” is a short story from the collection “The Young Wife and Other Stories” which surfaced on the Pakistani literary canvas in 1958. It weaves the tale of a newly married couple, at the threshold of sensual and sexual intimacy. Alas, it is entangled with the Punjabi machismo of Qadir who is compelled to not relent to his wife, Shirin. Thence, “the story highlights the patriarchal man’s dual state of being a predator and a victim simultaneously”

(Malik et.al. "Style in Fiction"). Patriarchy looms as a daunting force which "in the name of maintaining order in society ... programs morality and sexuality both for man and woman as portrayed in that mystified story" (24). Patriarchal villainy hovers over Qadir, culminating in his suicide as a consequence of being unable to pull the reigns of Shirin in compliance to his masculine ego.

The theoretical framework for the study is Ecocriticism which emerged as a theory in 1900s but was steeped in anonymity, owing to a lack of coherence in its multifarious strains and legitimacy. It was initially referred to as Eco theory, pastoral study, ecology, and regionalism or simply fell under the banner of American studies. After its advent in the literary horizon in the 1960s and 1970s, a few theorists posited ideas which eventually formed Ecocriticism, also known as Green (cultural) studies, Eco-poetics and Environmental Literary criticism. William Rueckart is the first person to coin the term in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism". Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* on environment and science, penned down in 1962, confers much fodder for the theory. However, it was Cheryll Glotfelty who contributed a lion's share to the theoretical framework in 1996 in *The Ecocriticism Reader*. Thus, ecocriticism gained momentum from 1996 onwards.

Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary theory which navigates the symbiotic relationship of man and nature. Ecocriticism is the unearthing of the impact of nature on man and vice versa. Put simply, it is the art of "analyzing the practices of society in relationship to nature" ("Ecocriticism") for it is a "mainstream assumption that the natural world be seen primarily as a resource for human beings" (2). Ecocriticism affirms the "assumption". Ecocriticism is generally divided into three waves. The first wave dealt with nature writing; what Glotfelty calls an "undervalued genre" (7). The second wave emerged in the 2000s with the focal lens on public health environment. It was from this moment that "'nature' has been used to legitimize gender, sexual and racial norms" (qtd. in "Ecocriticism" 7). The second wave was socio-centric environmentalism. Whereas the prevalent third wave has a wider outlook. It tackles global issues, intermixed with politics and philosophy to delineate a universal perspective. Thus, ecocriticism raises awareness about the environment to demean anthropocentric values, where man reigns supreme. Studies now advocate nature as an elemental force for the humans. Rueckert calls it "... the grounds upon which the two communities – the human, the natural – can coexist, cooperate, and flourish in the biosphere" (qtd. in Gladwin *Ecocriticism* ).

Sexuality can be viewed through nature, as is evident in the research. One of the ways of depicting sexual desire is through a concept called BDSM, which stands for Bondage/Discipline, Dominance/Submission and Sadism/Masochism. It involves making love to one's partner in an eccentrically arousing manner, not within the conventional norms as it involves infliction of pain to attain mastery over the other partners. Consequently, BDSM is conferred to be a power play where the dynamics revolve around affection and willing submission to the Dom(inant) partner by the Sub(missive) one. "Pleasure in BDSM does not necessarily need to be sexual" (*An Introduction to BDSM*). Many couples derive enticement through roleplaying bondage or mastery alone. The carnal arousal renders a rush of the hormone endorphin in the human system which piques the experience.

Albeit BDSM is looked down upon for its overtly violent nature, its strains have been latently prevalent since time immemorial. Ancient Greek art imitates instances of BDSM. The archaic Indian erotica *Kamasutra* delineates spanking as an act of sensual pleasure. Nevertheless, BDSM flourished in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when some brothels practiced female dominance

in sexual dynamics for men who desired subjectivity as a client. Moreover, the French author Marquis de Sade published the first novel on sadism and masochism in 1791, entitled “Justine”. Thus, Sadism emerged as a construct of hurling pain as a sexual act. Later on, in 1870 Leopold von Sacher- Masoch published a novel called *Venus in Furs* which dealt with sexual suppression of males. This flowered the notion of masochism i.e. receiving torment in sexual activities. However, in 1905 Sigmund Freud coined the term sadomasochism as a neurotic form of seeking relish in sexual intimacy. In addition to that, since de Sade was charged with criminal insanity, the entire concept of sadistic lovemaking morphed into a psychologically disturbing idea. Nevertheless, contemporary couples predominantly in the USA; indulge in BDSM. It is a bond of not mere mastery and slavery, but sheer intimacy as partners trust each other with actions that put their life at risk. Moreover, BDSM cloaks utmost care and respect for each other’s desires with a sense of acceptance of all peculiar fantasies. Thus, it is an unconventional form of accentuated love, respect and endearment.

The research study aims to illuminate how the concept of the surrounding geographical landscape influences and then reflects Qadir’s psychosexual dilemma as a man/husband in a Muslim patriarchal society. This is further studied to explore the concept of power associated with South Asian masculinity which gives birth to toxic masculinity. Nevertheless, the research shows a counterforce in the form the Shirin’s female consciousness. Her sensuality is interpreted as a latent form of Agency which gives a massive blow to Ghulam Qadir’s distorted sense of masculinity. By doing so, the study manifests how the female body resists to masculinity by owning its sensuality. Lastly, the research delves deep into the prevalence of the power play of pain and sexual pleasure in the Pakistani short story, using the lens of Algolagnia.

“The Bull and the She-Devil” by Zaibunissa Hamidullah has been hailed as a masterpiece of Pakistani writing in English as it navigates through the turbulence of gender dynamics in the Punjabi culture. Despite juggling with thematic concerns ranging from sexuality to patriarchy, which are deemed a taboo in the Pakistani rural society, the story is “simplistic in its narrative” (Khalique, 2009). The diction is “whimsical, poetic and peppered with romanticism” (3). The critical study latches onto the review pertaining to “romanticism” to weave a web work of sexuality explored through ecocriticism in the tale. Nevertheless, “a spark of hope ... yearning for a better life” (4) is depicted as the zenith of harmony and intimacy lurks on the horizon.

A critic, Izugabara, opines that a paragon of female sexuality “depicts good woman as lacking sexual desire and men as sexually active, hot and strong... having firmer control of sexuality than women” (qtd. in Malik et.al “Style in Fiction”). Furthermore, Malik, Sadia and Bhugio, in their paper titled “Style in Fiction: A Stylistic Analysis of *The Bull and the She-Devil*” affirm that female sexuality denotes “anarchy and chaos” whilst the male sexuality is machismo. True to form, it is observed by Qadir who “tries to chain his own sexuality” (qtd. in Malik et.al “Style in Fiction” 22). It is an endeavor to showcase the inherent power of man by dint of commanding his own sexuality to refrain from becoming a doting husband in a phallogocentric society, which views such a husband as meek and effeminate. Furthermore, “... his wife’s power to control her sexuality poses a great threat to his masculinity” (qtd. in Malik et.al “Style in Fiction” 22). Since “Anger is “the one accepted feeling in masculine emotional code”” (qtd. in Malik et.al “Style in Fiction” 24), Qadir manifests a power show of his ire to win back his lost pride in the guise of machismo. It is “the machismo values

(which) teach man to be emotionally detached” (qtd. in Malik et.al “Style in Fiction” 24). Thus, ensures a tussle between Qadir and Shirin.

In “Antara or Majnun?” – Explaining femininities”, Sana Imtiaz demarcates between Antara and Majnun to decipher the personality of Ghulam Qadir sketched by Hamidullah. Antara is the emblem of patriotism, and a phallogocentric husband averted to the endearments of his wife. Thus, he represents a sturdy man and the “role carries with it all the positive connotation”. On the contrary, Majnun is a lover, steeped in the depths of passion to the extent of acquiring the title of a mad man i.e. Majnun. Imtiaz asserts that “the second role consists of everything negative in masculinity” (qtd. in Imtiaz “Antara or Majnun?” 392) as it succumbs to the feminine charm and attains subservience molded by sheer love. The researcher builds upon the argument to discern how Qadir oscillates amidst the two roles rendering self-annihilation in the quest to attain Algolagnia.

Cheryl Glotfelty has delineated the symbiotic relationship between nature and humans as: “human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it” (qtd. in “Ecocriticism”). True to form, ecocriticism is grounded in a realistic portrayal of life where one’s environment encapsulates and then molds the cognitive and sentimental constructs. Lawrence Buell denotes that the study of ecocriticism is “... often intensified by some conception of an innate bond – whether biological, psychological, or spiritual – conjoining the individual human being and the natural world” (“Ecocriticism” 8).

Ecocriticism has been classified into three tropes which further categorize the three waves of the theoretical construct. Firstly, Pastoral Literature traces the rudimentary literature which explores nature. Secondly, Old World Wilderness is connoted with the manifestation of demonic cults and rituals prevalent in American Literature. Consequently, the wilderness is a vast expanse to be feared. This sinister view of literature is proved by the researcher in Hamidullah’s short story “The Bull and the She-Devil”. It is noteworthy that the prevalence of wilderness as a demonic force was a trope in American Literature because the roots of Ecocriticism are found in the American diaspora. Lastly, ecofeminism creates a parallel between the fertile soil and the female body. Strikingly, both are properties of a man and are tamed or nourished as per his command. Ecofeminism, thus, deals with patriarchy striking “a parallel in men’s thinking between their “right” to exploit nature, on the one hand, and the use they make of women, on the other” (Buel et.al “Literature and Environment”). Greta Gaard and Patrick D Murphy claim that the exploitation of land is based on class differences, racism, colonialism and neocolonialism.

Arne Naess is the founder of deep ecology who opines that “the importance of togetherness and cooperation in the plant and animal world” (qtd. in Ashok, *Eco Criticism and Literature*) intimates Modern Ecology. She highlights the notion of harmony which is imperative for Ecocriticism. Consequently, it is felt that they have an impact on the human world. This renders a deep-rooted bond in the strata of ecology. Scheese denotes that “landscape itself is a dominant character” (qtd. in Ashok, *Eco Criticism and Literature*). The critic elaborates upon the definition of landscape to broaden the horizon, which in turn constitutes of an array of items in Ecocritical study. “Landscape by definition includes the non-human elements of place – rocks, soil, trees, plants, rivers, animals, air – as well as human perceptions and modification” (qtd. in Ashok, *Eco Criticism and Literature*). This inference is deemed to be imperative as the animal kingdom, in unison with the natural world, influences and then mirrors Ghulam Qadir’s turmoil. Put simply, Barry Commoner’s



first law of ecosystem ecology is apt. It asserts that “everything is connected to everything else” (qtd. in Ashok, *Eco Criticism and Literature*). Furthermore, Bill McKibben posits that “our...appetites and habits and desires [can] now be read in every cubic meter of air, in ever increment on the thermometer (qtd. in Ashok, *Eco Criticism and Literature*). It is the projection of human “desires”, or the inference through the natural phenomenon, which intensifies the bond between nature, animal, and man.

Sexuality and sensuality are constructs which have intrigued humans, specifically the owner of the phallus. The reason for this is that “... through female sexuality women can expand their self, agency and social status” (Hanh “Femininity and female sexual”). As a result, female sexuality is always a force usurped and denied to its rightful owner by the malignant patriarchal ideology.

BDSM is controversial because power dynamics mingle with sexual play. Since many a times, the Dom/Top is a male (in heterogeneous couples) who inflicts pain onto the Sub/Bottom; a girl “some people perceive this as incompatible with feminist values” (Meeker et.al., 2020). It is construed as “sexual slavery” (Brown et.al. “A Systematic Scoping”). However, it is noteworthy that in BDSM, “the key element of consent does remain” (Devraj, “Feminism in Literature”). Thus, nullifying gender bias to ensure gender equality. Baumeister has formulated his notions in the Escape from Self theory which delves into the psychological depth of a Dom and Sub. “As successful people (in career or personal life) may have high levels of self-control, this model persists that successful individuals will tend more towards masochism than sadism because (of) the desire to relinquish their own control” (Brown et.al. “A Systematic Scoping”). This bridges the gap of gender dichotomy as either of the two genders balances out his/her role as a domineering or docile personality by eschewing from their oft-shown personality. Likewise, “people who identify as sadistic are doing so not to relinquish the self, but out of a need to assert control and bolster their own self...” (1).

The idiosyncrasy in BDSM lies in the deviance from “...many of our normal definitions of terms such as violence, sex, pain, and enjoyment” (Airaksinen “The Language of Pain”). The uncanny journey of attaching new constructs with the aforementioned mundane words make them “... either lose their conventional meaning or become alien, ambiguous, controversial, or essentially contested” (4). The mere shift in the lexicon connotes a drastic change in the socio-cultural and religious identification pertaining to sex. “Pain and humiliation”, otherwise a punitive action, take on the aim of revelry (1). Likewise, BDSM also confers “... liberation of erotic potential from Puritan ethics” (qtd. in Airaksinen “The Language of Pain”).

Furthermore, heroism and suffering are part and parcel with the true essence of BDSM. “The pain is here a kind of hardship condition that is needed for reaching the desired goal, or sexualized pleasure” (Airaksinen “A Philosophical and”). BDSM denotes suffering as the ultimate milestone for a hero to achieve to vanquish the stains of pleasure and sexual gratification. “... therefore, he would not like to avoid them or even to diminish their force however terrifying they might be” (53). It is also essential that “... the pain must be excruciatingly strong” (53) because “he cannot be a hero without the relevant suffering...” (55). It is the suffering which elevates his stature to attain sublimity of sensuality and the label of a safe and trustworthy partner for the nefarious BDSM. “... now (that) he realizes that he needs (it)”, “he is willing to suffer” (55). Timo Airaksinen compares the idea of

heroism in BDSM with blatant heroism in his paper “A Philosophical and Rhetorical Theory of BDSM”. He asserts that “I compare this situation with that of heroic action where the agent aims at glory via some conquered hardship conditions” (62).

Hence, the concept of suffering is imperative to surpass pain and achieve excellence, which in turn renders sexual pleasure. “Medically, sexually loaded pain preference is called Algolagnia” (60). Active Algolagnia involves infliction of pain whilst submission intimates Passive Algolagnia. A third category persists in merely “witnessing” the display of torture. Success in such lovemaking is only acquired by dint of sexual torment of “excruciatingly strong” (64) pain or submission to sexual and physical turmoil. The “essence of heroic desire is glory” (65). Airaksinen asserts that “in order to achieve glory, one must first suffer from some serious hard-ship conditions” (66). This justifies the psyche behind incorporation of agony in sexual play which marks BDSM. “... heroic desires must be somehow exceptional, generally undesirable, and intense enough to be more or less impossible and unbearable” (68). It is felt that the power to endure such intensified pain is tantamount to completing a Herculean feat which makes the task heroic and a matter of “glory” (68). Timo Airaksinen also elaborates upon bifurcation between pain and pleasure as “... pleasure always tracks pain and not the other way round” (70).

The paper is a textual analysis of a short story “The Bull and the She-Devil” by Pakistani author, Zaibunissa Hamidullah as the primary text. The secondary source comprises of Ecocriticism by Cheryl Glotfelty and the fundamental concept of Bondage/Discipline, Dominance/Submission, and Sadism/Masochism (BDSM). In addition to that, reviews, scholarly journals, electronic media, and interviews also contribute as the secondary resource of research.

It is qualitative and inductive research, based on the pattern of grounded theory. It is not inter-disciplinary research. The significance of the study lies in broadening the vista of critical research on Hamidullah’s work which has not been viewed from the lens of sexuality through ecocriticism and as a Punjabi precursor of BDSM. Future researchers can explain strands of Mysticism by dint of Ecocriticism in the selected text.

The critical study probes into the geographical dynamics of Punjab as an emblem of sociological and psychological mold of masculine epitome. Consequently, the researcher navigates through ecocentric ideals to explore sexual nuances embedded in Zaibunissa Hamidullah’s short story “The Bull and the She-Devil”. The study manifests sexual stigmas inculcated in the Punjabi, rural set up to fan the sparks of patriarchy. Furthermore, the study traces a symbiotic relationship betwixt nature, sexuality, pain and pleasure. The last facet is predominantly inferred as a stance of Algolagnia at its zenith. As a result, the study also views Qadir as a Dominant sexual partner, in compliance to the phenomena of BDSM.

Zaibunissa Hamidullah’s title “The Bull and the She Devil” is heavily laded with symbolic textures. The researcher delves into the latent inference of gender stereotyping to accentuate the streams of sexuality controlled and then unleashed in the plot, in compliance to the critical research. Bull is an emblem of manliness in the Spanish tradition. Since the bull is a powerful animal, oozing with robust virility, it represents manhood not only in the aforementioned tradition but in the Pakistani narrative also. Thus, the Bull is a manifestation of Machismo. Moreover, its animalistic nature resonates the carnal desires evident in Ghulam Qadir, its owner. Generally, bulls are “emblems of death, tyranny, ferocity, brutality, stubbornness, lust and the Devil” (“Bull Symbol”). It is evident that the animal is a robust figure. Its association with “death” refers to the traces of Algolagnia explored in the study. Whereas

“tyranny” resonates the sexual play with pain and pleasure inflicted by a Dom in BDSM. Likewise, “ferocity” and “brutality” reek of the sexual dominance that a man craves in any society, akin to the Punjabi Ghulam Qadir. It is ironic that the bull is an animal associated with the Devil, for female sexuality unbridled is declared demonic. True to form, Hamidullah mirrors the South Asian belief of the female sexual Agency as uncongenial and a taboo. Hence, devilish.

According to Classical mythology, Poseidon and Thor ride bulls. It is noteworthy that both sea gods harness bulls, the symbol of “lust”. Consequently, water imagery represents sexual fluids and lust. Likewise, Germanic myth idealizes bull as the harbinger of a tempest or storm. This storm is inferred to mirror the psychosexual torrent residing within humans. In Indian mythology, “The Nandi Bull symbolizes sexual energy when ridden by Shiva but this energy is transformed at times to spiritual energy” (3). Since Pakistan and India share a collective conscious based on their merged history in the sub-continent prior to 1947, the Punjabi rural man and his farm animal portend machismo. It is also noteworthy that the Nandi Bull is a deity for protection of Kailash, the home of Lord Shiva. This lends the animal a godlike stature. The study interprets the bull as a symbol of its sexually frustrated owner, Ghulam Qadir. True to form, he harbors lust and wreaks havoc, culminating to murder and suicide. Being a man in a patriarchal set up, he holds a similar status of the protective godlike deity in the Punjabi rural, phallogocentric world. Yet it is ironic that he is named Ghulam i.e. a servant. This highlights his servitude to the female charm and vulnerability at the behest of his sexual machismo which is natural but abhorred by phallogocentric ideals. The male protagonist’s name is self-contradictory. It reflects a servile behavior, but it also mirrors his desire to overrule the female sexuality of Shirin. True to form, the roots of his name Qadir are in one of God’s names i.e. Al- Qadeer. It is evident of omnipotence and utter power which is associated with a man in the patriarchal set up. Thus, the character juggles between being a Ghulam and Qadir; a Dom and a Sub.

The counterpart of the Bull, a representative of Ghulam Qadir, in Hamidullah’s rich short story is the She-Devil, who is a blatant symbol of Qadir’s wife, Shirin. It is felt that she is termed as the She-Devil to reflect the Punjabi patriarchal psyche which does not allow a woman to acknowledge, control and set free her desire for lust or love. It is a privilege only reserved for the male figure. Consequently, any woman who exerts control over her sensuality and sexuality is deemed a devil in the Asian society. As a result, Shirin and her title are antithesis to Ghulam Qadir. Furthermore, since she wields power over her husband, she is an apt antagonist from the South Asian perspective. True to form, Qadir blames her for the havoc he wreaks. This also renders the She-Devil the role of a siren who bewitches the male figure in the short story, coaxing him into shedding blood. It is felt that the title of a She-Devil is redolent of Lilith. She was also declared a demon-witch by the Judaic folklore for transgressing against Adam, her husband and God. Furthermore, it is claimed that the first wife of Adam i.e. Lilith absconded from him and flew up after a dispute in which she had demanded sexual dominance. Her flight upwards aids feminist narrative to intimate that she soared high, akin to Shirin who controls her husband’s psychosexual desires. It was a flight atop the patriarchal pillars of suffocation. In addition to that, “This has great significance because it mimics a symbolic ritual that Muslim hajjis or pilgrims perform at Mina outside Makkah each year for the annual Hajj” (Maher “The subaltern as”). It is an activity to denounce Satan just like Qadir throws pebbles at the reflection of the She-Devil in the water in the well. Rather his chanting of the title for his wife mimics the literature of the Old World Wilderness. Thus, Ecocriticism is evident as nature is the physical

space to abjure demonic forces in the genre. True to form, the setting of the story is a rural landscape where the She-Devil and antagonist is Shirin.

It is felt that Zaibunissa Hamidullah's short story "The Bull and the She Devil" is replete with diction that caters to ecocriticism. The researcher infers a symbiotic relationship where nature is employed to reflect human desires. For instance, the story begins "The well was one only infrequently used" (42). Allegorically, it reflects the suppressed male sexual desires of Ghulam Qadir. The water in the well is a representation of sexual fluids which ooze "only infrequently" because the "use(d)" or expression of male sexuality for a wife, specifically out of mere devotion, is deemed an aversive act in the realm of Punjabi machismo. Likewise, nature is also depicted to be in utter control of man as "the fields gave up to him their abundance" (43). This intimates the supremacy of man, who is Qadir (powerful) over "the fields" as he makes them fertile. This lends Qadir dominance over nature. Thereby, asserting an ecocritical study. It also makes nature an emblem of the female body which is equally subservient to man for "he was her master and would force her to bring forth the fruits of her womb" (43) akin to the fertile land.

Nature is frequently used to describe Shirin: "... Shirin (is) as sweet as the scent of champak flowers" (44). Hamidullah's consistent use of nature to define Shirin is inferred to depict harmony between a human soul and nature. Both share the essence of a similar "scent" as nature and humans are interconnected. The fragrance of nature basks Shirin in it to also denote the fragile beauty of a woman which entices the senses of a man just as a flower evokes olfactory sensations in the demeanor of the bull. Furthermore, Shirin's docile and soft personality makes the animal feel calm and tranquil, as opposed to Ghulam Qadir who agitates it. "Nearing the animal she called out to it softly and soothingly" (50) until "in its frantic circlings it became calmer" (50). In both cases, man's impact upon nature, inclusive of the animal kingdom, is portrayed.

It is noteworthy that the author entangles natural imagery with human delineation which is analyzed to reflect the effect of nature on man. Consequently, binding them as one. The ecocritical strands accentuate the linguistic profession: "...his thick crop of unruly black hair" (42). It intimates how nature influences the cognitive and linguistic utterance of humans. This denotes how the rural man thinks in terms of nature, striking a similarity between his hair and the "Crop" that he harnesses. Thence, nature is shown by Zaibunissa Hamidullah as a hovering notion which predominates the psyche of humans. In addition to that, nature is synonymous to the vast field of desire lurking within Ghulam Qadir so nature aids in reflecting the unsaid yearnings of the male protagonist. "The sun was hotter today than he had ever known it before, and all around him the earth lay hard and parched and barren" (44). It is the epiphany of Qadir, who has suppressed his carnal desires, culminating to him being "hotter" by dint of sexual arousal. Alas, he is left "hard" but "parched". He cannot immerse in Shirin's body so he feels "barren". This inhibition is practiced in order to live up to the phallogocentric bravado and machismo which does not let a man love a woman's soul or body as it enables him to be vulnerable to her dominance. Albeit the construct is fallacious. Consequently, "he looked once more full into the face of the blazing morning sun" (45) and exclaims angrily. The natural imagery denotes his sexual frustration. Alas, his "morning" does not shine with rays of hope for phallogocentric ideals encage Qadir in the darkness of male sexual repression to assert control. True to form, it is a Punjabi tradition that the Pahalwaan (wrestlers) exercise chastity to uplift



physical virility; lest emotional weakness warps their physical strength and “surrender(ed) your (the male) soul into this She-Devil’s keeping” (47).

Ecocritical studies shed light onto Old World Wilderness in American literature, where nature acts as a sphere of occults, magic and the supernatural element. The research evinces a similar trend in the Punjabi landscape created by Zaibunissa Hamiddullah in “The Bull and the She Devil”. Ghulam Qadir is “... like a man possessed” (42) when he peered into the darkness” (42) of the deep well. The well is deciphered to be a dark abyss which evokes “excitement” (42) in Qadir. Thus, he becomes a Ghulam i.e. a slave, to the nefarious spell of the diabolical side of nature. He becomes “possessed” with the desire to unleash his sexuality. This urge of his is reflected to him in nature, akin to a reflection in the mirror. The natural landscape echoes the yearnings that he severely harbors for his wife, Shirin. Unfortunately, he is enchained by patriarchal masculinity which forbids him to dote on a woman. “He continued yelling as he tilled the soil” (47) like a man “possessed” with agitation. Therefore, nature not only reflects his psychosexual stage but also bears the brunt of his inability to love his wife. He projects his ire onto nature. He employs Freudian Displacement to blame Shirin in lieu of the patriarchal metanarrative of masculinity. Consequently, he chants “She Devil” thrice in the scorching fields, resonating the occult practices depicted in Old World Wilderness talks of Ecocriticism.

The phallocentric narrative also deems a woman the role of a siren for her beauty mitigates masculine virility. True to form, Shirin is depicted as a seductress who ensnares Ghulam Qadir. “She would be sitting by the fire now, he knew, her black hair, newly washed, flowing gracefully around her and reaching to her knees” (43). It is striking that Shirin is apposite for the role of a witch as per South Asian folktales because a churail/witch is always a woman with ebony black hair which reach up to her legs. In cases of hyperbole, they may even be till her feet. In addition to that, the enchantress is associated with “fire”. Firstly, it denotes the passion of sexual love that she evokes in her husband. Secondly, fire is associated with Satan. Likewise, she is always “sitting by the fire”, as if on her throne, ready to devour the naïve, besotted male. The notion of Shirin as a siren, or an emblem of sin, is accentuated when the researcher interprets her to be the elemental drive for Qadir succumbing to his desires of making love to his wife, since any form of love for a wife is besmeared as a mark of effeminacy. As a result, Ghulam Qadir “looked with antagonism at the fine beast of burden in him” (44). Since the study unveils the bull to be a symbol of Qadir’s sexual virility, his sentiments of “antagonism” towards it denote abhorrence for straying from the path of machismo and phallocentric ideals. Furthermore, the source of such an inkling is Shirin, who is viewed as an antagonist by him. Additionally, the bull is also called a “shaitaan” (44). This suggests how sexuality is viewed as Satanic in a Muslim rural culture, even amidst a married couple. Consequently, the study highlights the complex hypocrisy deeply embedded in a patriarchal South Asian rural psyche via interpreting nature as a symbolic representation of the human emotions and actions.

Hitherto the study textually analyzed “The Bull and the She-Devil” as an exploration of sexuality through Ecocriticism. In addition to that, the researcher also sheds light onto strokes of BDSM at work in the short story. Ghulam Qadir is a representative of patriarchy which revels in attributes of machismo and sturdy manhood, affiliated with domestic abuse to assert utter control over females. It is felt that Qadir’s gestures of violence betray the prevalence of a Dom(inant) lurking within him. Thence, his form of torment is fathomed to always denote the sexual proclivity of a Dom(inant) partner in the unconventional sexual dynamics of BDSM. Outwardly, Shirin’s “sensitive face” (42), “soft slow smile” (42), “eyes so full of tenderness” (42) and

“lovely face” (42) “irritated him so” (42). Whereas, in reality it is the very same features which entice him to love her wildly and in an eccentric manner to affirm his mastery over her body in the intimate play of sexual intercourse. Consequently, akin to a Dom, “in a sudden outburst of fury he clenched his fist...” (42) at Shirin’s hallucinated reflection in his memory. The fact that he imagines Shirin at work, testifies his desire for her. Thus, the study unravels Qadir as a Dom who relishes an abusive intimate sexual play, or at least yearns to depict his strength in bed in such a manner.

In spite of reveling the role of a Dominant, Ghulam Qadir wavers to being a Sub(missive). Shirin’s “persuasive accents” (42) naturally influence him. Even if he is “irritated” (42) by her “soft” (42) and charming tone, he is nevertheless at her mercy. She wields command over his emotions, riling up sentiments of agitation as a mechanism to shirk away from the power her words have on him. This reveals that Qadir switches from being a Dom to a Sub, quite often; albeit inadvertently. The switch is also depicted in the symbolic meanings of his name. True to form, he consistently acts as a Switch from Qadir i.e. Dominant to Ghulam, viz Sub. Furthermore, conventionally speaking, Shirin is designated as the Sub. This is common in sexual dynamics where the woman is docile and appeases her male partner. In addition to that, the scaffolds of patriarchy hurl her with the title of a Sub only. However, Shirin transcends norms. She depicts her Agency by manifesting her influence over the animal kingdom. By doing so, the researcher construes it to be a triumph over Qadir’s sexuality also, as the bull represents his carnal self. Consequently, when Shirin “calmed the creature and led it back as easily as if it had been a baby lamb” (44), she hails over patriarchy, nature and Qadir in the domain of physical expression of love by dint of symbolism. Thus, akin to Qadir, Shirin also exhibits the fluid role of a Switch in BDSM.

Amidst the switching between Dom and Sub, Shirin propagates feminist strands. She asserts her Agency through her command over nature and her husband. She affirms her existence as “a separate being, an individual in her own right, a stranger” (44). Furthermore, it is also evident that a woman inherently wields power over a man, even in the guise of a Sub. Her presence as the sensual and dainty sex raises her from the stature of the weaker sex. It inadvertently confers her with dominance in the guise of a Sub. This notion is prevalent in the text as Shirin haunts Qadir and holds the reigns to his psyche till his last breath.

Despite the sexual role of Switch, Qadir is felt to harbor a tendency for Sadism. True to form, his elder brother affirms that “...since the arrival of your bride. You’ve become both rude and callous” (48). The presence of a sexual partner whom he can physically, sexually and psychologically dominate, is felt to be the elemental drive for embracing the Sadist lurking within him. Sadism is the pleasure one derives from inflicting pain onto a sexual partner. The infliction morphs into a sense of contentment and bliss, mingled with power which sexually excites the Dom. Thus, the “rude and callous” behavior of Qadir is evident “since the arrival” of Shirin. True to form, “you (Qadir) beat your wife” (48) despite being smitten by her. His amalgam of love and violence is apt for a Sadist akin to Ghulam, who beats his wife as a Dom would in the sexual role play. It confers power, a sense of violent lust, which itself lends influence and crude flow of sexual desire. It ultimately bestows the oft sought dominance by a phallogocentric sadist, Ghulam Qadir.

Algolagnia is the pinnacle of pleasure in BDSM. It incorporates a fusion of pain with pleasure. The infliction heightens the sensuality of the perpetrator/Sadist or victim/Masochist. In “The Bull and the She-Devil”, Ghulam Qadir is evidently an agent of destruction. He brims with

insanity as he derives pleasure from the power that oozes from inflicting pain onto others. Qadir “wanted her (Shirin) to desire him” (46) but the South Asian rural ideology bars from relishing in affection for his wife. Consequently, the research affirms the bull to represent his masculine “desire”. Out of mere guilt for transgressing the norms even in his heart, “his anger against the animal returned” (46). This ire is for himself so “he prodded it viciously between its legs” (46) to punish himself for unleashing his sensuality and sexuality. Moreover, he “felt a passing satisfaction at the way the poor beast winced” (46). This is reflective of a Sadist enjoying *Algolagnia*. It also intimates self-infliction as the bull represents his owner. Put simply, it is the “passing satisfaction” (46) which cements Qadir’s proclivity for *Algolagnia*. This tendency reaches its apex when Ghulam Qadir amplifies the agony of souls to barbarity. The Dom within him “hit her with the stick” (50). Furthermore, his violence intensifies as he brutally wounds his brother and ultimately kills his own nephew. It is noteworthy that “again and again he hit out, joying in it” (50). Research affirms that ideally Doms are deprived of power in the non-sexual spheres of life. True to form, Qadir is a pawn of phallogentrism who basks in the glory of being a Dom once he marries Shirin. The role inadvertently sinks into his soul, rendering him to be a Sadist who relishes *Algolagnia*. Nevertheless, the love for torment is heightened as he overarches into the sphere of annihilation; “joying in it”. The murder of his nephew confers him sexual bliss, which lurks on the edge of insanity and unconventionality; two traits of *BDSM*. The amalgam of pain and pleasure excites the Dom slithering within Ghulam Qadir

An ecocritical study of the short story also affirms a transfixing influence of water over Ghulam Qadir. On one hand, water represents cleansing or curbing his sexuality. True to form, while “washing” (49) his hands, he reveals that he has to “tie the bull” (49). It is analyzed as a metaphor for tethering his libido to represent male strength. Consequently, “washing” is a symbolic purification of Qadir to wash away all carnal lust from within him, since any form of love for a woman is tantamount to subjection of a male in the South Asian psyche. Furthermore, the well is deciphered as a reference to the Old-World Wilderness. “Her face smiled up at him” (51) from the water of the well, conjuring him to “leap” (51) inside to commit suicide. As a result, the well is seen as an ominous abode of the “She-Devil” (51) which compels Qadir to shed blood. However, it is noteworthy that Qadir shirks away from personal responsibility. In lieu of facing the music in the court for the case of murder, he projects his guilt onto nature and blames the apparently magical water and Shirin, the “She-Devil” for his crimes. Thus, nature is employed to appease his conscience and bear the “dark depths” of his hollow manhood as he blames a woman for his sin.

All in all, the research affirms that nature is an emblem and mirror of Ghulam Qadir’s libidinal desires. He projects his latent sentiments onto nature and then the repercussions too. The main reason for this is that doting on a woman in the rural South Asian set up is tantamount to submitting to a woman. Furthermore, the study manifests an incessant tussle for Qadir who switches from the role of a Dom to a Sub.

A painstaking analysis of Zaibunissa Hamidullah’s short story “The Bull and the She-Devil” through the lens of Cheryl Glotfelty’s *Ecocriticism* unearths a symbiotic relationship between man and nature.

Ghulam Qadir is inferred to be a helpless pawn of patriarchal norms which control the expression of libidinal desire for a woman, even one’s wife. This reflects the South Asian concept of warped masculinity which deems doting on a woman as an emblem of effeminacy. Consequently, the protagonist is stuck between the devil and the deep blue sea. An outpour of

sexuality goes hand in hand with self-chastisement; projected in the form of causing havoc on nature and animals. Thus, nature reflects the physio-psychological intricacies of Qadir.

The study also denotes the proclivity for a reading of BDSM. Ghulam Qadir is apt for the role of a Dom(inant) in a phallogocentric society which confers the role of a Sub(missive) to Shirin. Yet both characters undergo the status of a Switch. This depicts a shift in the paradigms of power and control. Thence, the study also unravels the Agency of Shirin in the short story. Lastly, Qadir's malevolent and ghastly acts of violence, along with the ultimate murder and suicide, aptly portrays prevalence of Algolagnia in the probing of "The Bull and the She-Devil".

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