



Gender Disparity and Social Disintegration: A Critical Study of Andrew Marvell’s Selected Poems

Dr.Tribhuwan Kumar

Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers, Vol. 14 (2)

<https://jett.labosfor.com/>

Date of reception: 05 Jan 2023

Date of revision: 16 Feb 2023

Date of acceptance: 01 Mar 2023

Dr.Tribhuwan Kumar (2023). Gender Disparity and Social Disintegration: A Critical Study of Andrew Marvell’s Selected Poems. *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*, Vol. 14(2). 46-54.

¹Assistant Professor of English, College of Science and Humanities at Sulail, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia



Gender Disparity and Social Disintegration: A Critical Study of Andrew Marvell's Selected Poems

Dr. Tribhuwan Kumar¹

¹Assistant Professor of English, College of Science and Humanities at Sulail, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia

Email: t.kumar@psau.edu.sa

ABSTRACT

The present study provides an analysis of two major poems written by Andrew Marvell: "To His Coy Mistress" and "The Garden" from a feminist perspective. The study examines how women are exploited by men; how they are considered as objects of their pleasure in "To His Coy Mistress" and how they are demeaned to a very degrading status and as less attractive and less beautiful when compared to the beauty of a tree in "The Garden". The poet condemns women and establishes a world without them in a way that indicates his hatred to them. One focal issue the paper is to underscore how the misogynistic tendency adopted by men toward women adversely impacts their relationships as lovers. Women, in the two selected poems, are shown as so naïve and innocent that men can easily be fooled and trapped to gain certain physical advantages. How patriarchy manipulates the fundamental rights of women is another focal point of the study. Through a close textual examination of the lines of the selected poems, the researcher will pinpoint how Andrew's frame of mind in his portrayal of women is feminist oriented. The study concludes with examples from the selected poems that Andrew Marvell's narrator shows his specific frame of mind in portrayal of female characters. The female characters have been presented in such a way so that readers' sympathy might be achieved and by doing this he deploys various literary tactics. The female characters are so naïve and innocent that male characters are able to easily make them fool and trap them to gain certain advantages.

Keywords: discourse analysis, feminist perspective in poetry, "To His Coy Mistress", "The Garden"

1. INTRODUCTION

Feminism, in its general sense, is a reaction against the prevailing patriarchal practices of men in their adverse conduct towards women. It is a term used for the eradication of gender bias. It is also an attempt to do away with the inherent oppression of women in a male-dominated society. Discrimination, violence, segregation, subjugation and subordination are some words that are used for the representation of women in society. Gender is one of the propelling forces which have engendered a bulk of narrative. The feminist writers have meticulously used the narrative strategies to evince their stance regarding the socially charged and polemical issue of gender construction and representation. So, feminist perspective of any literary piece manifests and unearths the latent issues where female has been portrayed as an inferior being. Feminist literary critics have such bent of mind that rejects patriarchal frame of mind.

It would be absurd to talk about feminism and not to mention three waves of feminism to explain the superficial differences upon the concerns of feminism throughout the history. Women's demands for an amelioration in society increased largely in 19th century, but it does not mean that it was the start when women were challenging their segregated position in the society.

The arc of this theory is to revolt against any kind of superficial restraints. It has obtained a stunning place in gender debates. By the time it didn't constrained itself to societal aspect rather became an irresistible subject for academic theorists. Whether it is feminism as a social movement or feminism as a literary theory, these are not distinct from each other; both try to seek gender inequalities and should not be taken mistakenly.

Women in pre-feminist era were not considered even a human being and were forcefully or willingly denied from the rights which they deserved. She was a symbol of sex, as many have said. Man was considered a blissful creation of God and woman was taken as his slave, or in more lenient words, perhaps as a caretaker for her husband and children, that's why man thanked to God for being a 'man'. On the other hand, woman remained passive and was so much absorbed in her role as a so called care taker that she thanked to God for being made her according to the wishes of her master, obviously a 'Man'. Her identification was nothing unless she was conceptualized in the mirror of a man related to her. It is some forty or fifty years back that the world

saw an emergence of a new critical moment in the history of feminism in particular and history of women subjugation in general. Although the struggle for equality was not new, but this time, it left a solid impact on culture and society and it also prefigured the debate into further contest. It presented a new version and diverted its focus from mere economic or social rights to the wider concepts of self and identity.

Feminism as a movement is the result of unjustified and disqualified division between male and female in a society. It is a reaction against prevailing patriarchal practices as patriarchy is always there behind the unjust behavior towards women. Violence, segregation, subjugation, subordination and discrimination are some words that are used for the representation of women in society and feminism is an endeavor to eradicate these lower and inferior positions of women and to bring them up equal to man's superior positions (Kumar, 2017). The endeavor for eliminating these reservations of women can never be successful as far as patriarchy is there because it is the main culprit for the degradation of women and up gradation of men. Thus boundaries are differentiated between men and women according to their so called hierarchal positions in which patriarchy rules the lives of women. Kate Millet expresses this view in her book in these words, "the patriarchy went on for centuries and is still well-integrated in our society. Men don't need to practice patriarchy with violence, because it is efficient without it" (Millet, 1990; p. 43). This very general biasness has been perceived by many critics and analysts, presumably pushing the debate into the limelight of critical theory.

Women have remained a segregated part of the society that is why there has always been a struggle to end this segregation on the part of the women. Feminism is a way to that struggle (Kumar, 2021). Feminism, as a literary theory, has propagated multiple issues related to woman's rights. The feminist literary criticism of today is directly related to the women's movement of the 1960. It plays a definite role in exposing mechanisms of Patriarchy. As a political theory, it has also succeeded in accusing a lot of women's rights for their weak position in a society, so that women may also be able to exercise their influence in the running of a society.

Women are differentiated on the basis of their sexuality or cultural and social unjust operations in the societies, Judith Butler (2004) in her book, *Undoing Gender* elaborately presents differences among various terms like sexuality, gender and sexual differences and proposes that these sexual differences are real or not, these must fulfill the objective of equality. Indulgence in the debate of terms may lead theorists to the bundle of misinterpretations, so the feminists' debate is not about to win the contest over difference among terminologies, it should be defensive about women's rights at global level.

Andrew Marvell is popular poet of the 17th century and he is mostly popular for writing political satire and lyrical verse. There is not a lot of information about Andrew Marvell's life after he left college; however, some of his early life is known. Marvell was born in 1621 and grew up in Yorkshire, England. Andrew's father was a professor at a church. When he was twelve years old, Marvell went to Trinity College to study in Cambridge, England. After the death of his father by drowning, he decided to stop pursuing his master's degree and left school. Much of the information regarding Marvell's life at that time is unclear. Some believe that while Marvell was at Cambridge, he was converted by the Jesuits and left college, but this story cannot be proven. Marvell is also thought to have traveled for years studying different languages and writing after he left Cambridge. Some believe he was a government agent. Others believe he tried to avoid going to war. For a period of time in the 1650s, Marvell is thought to have worked as a tutor. It was during this time that he was thought to have written some of his best pieces of literature.

Marvell also worked in various public offices. During the time that Marvell was in office, there was a lot of political tension and strife in England. Marvell criticized in his writings the court and Parliament based on his experiences in public office. Marvell was able to use his political position to help get his friends, such as a fellow poet John Milton, out of trouble.

After spending almost two decades in Parliament, Andrew Marvell died of a fever. Some people gossiped that the Jesuits, who Marvell often wrote about in his poetry, poisoned him to death, but these assertions possess no substantial ground. Marvell's poems were published in 1681. The preface of the book was written by Marvell's former housekeeper Mary, who posed as Marvell's wife to protect his estate. Marvell's writings are composed of lyrics and poetry.

1.1 Research Problem

The present study investigates the impact of the social pressures on the individual female characters in the two poems and the reaction of men toward their naivety, submission and subjugation. They have to suffer at different levels. The main problem of the research lies in how women, represented in the two poems as exploited both physically and spiritually victimized as a result of their subjugation by men and how their sufferings increase and results in an identity crisis.

1.2 Research Significance

The significance of the present study lies in providing a deeper understanding of the feminist approach adopted by Andrew Marvell in pinpointing the sufferings of women in the face of the different oppressive social and cultural forces prevailing in the society in the two selected poems. The feminist approach considers women in

light of the different social, cultural pressures that surround them and their struggle to adapt to their situations. Here, Feminism can be seen as a gateway for the reader to think of the status of women under any given circumstances before condemning them. In Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" and "The Garden", the speakers' suffering at the domestic as well as the outer community levels and their predicament can be enlightening to readers.

1.3 Research Objectives

The present study aims at exploring the different forces that conspire against women as a result of their submission to what men want them to be. The main objective of the study lies in exploring Andrew Marvell's feminist approach and his vision of the dilemma of women as a result of living in a male-dominated society. In short, this study provides literary cognizance to readers of the poetry of Andrew Marvell and endeavors to familiarize them with the Feminist approach in literature. The study seeks to underscore how women are torn between the physical requirements wanted by men and their attempt to achieve self-complacency. Here, the researcher explored how women have to struggle at different levels to come to term with the kind of life forced upon them by men from a feminist point of view.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher's choice of Andrew Marvell for critical appraisal is largely informed by his unique status as a male writer who displays an interest in projecting the condition of women during his time in his poetry.

This section of the article sheds light on the related literature akin to Feminism which is a movement for the rights of women. Shedding some light on the literature akin to Andrew Marvell, M. Craze, in his book *The Life and Lyrics of Andrew Marvell* (1979), sought to erect the argument on Marvell's poetry by applying Michel Foucault's early work on power and Bauman's theory on liquid that seeks to manifest that lives operate through subversive surveillance. Another book entitled *Textual Harassment of Marvell's Coy Mistress: The Institutionalization of Masculine Criticism* (2014) by Duyfhuizen. This book illustrates that the causes and effects of a patriarchal system in the light of the prevailing condition in the society affects gender roles. Also, the analysis of patriarchy and masculinity shows the image of woman in "To His Coy Mistress" is upheld by people who hold prejudice against women.

On the other hand, shedding light on Feminism the theory in question, Ritzer (2004) suggests that "Feminism is kind of critical social theory which included in social context, political, economic, and history that is facing by injustice people". She states that "Certain terms in contemporary theory, such as work, family, patriarchy, and sexuality, are used to sum up the basis experiences of women". Davies (1996) opines that "Feminism is women's assertion of their equality with men and their demand for access to those roles and positions of public life traditionally regarded as the province of men". The themes, which feminism explores are discrimination, objectification, oppression and aesthetic sense. This movement voiced against the oppression of female rights in society.

2.1 Feminist Discourse

Feminism is a set of ideologies that is concerned with defining, exploring and defending rights of women in a society. It doesn't propose any single concept or thought. Feminism is a theoretical debate over the issues of masculinity and femininity, thus feminist is the one who believes in the concerns of feminism and directly or indirectly involves himself in the struggle of women's rights.

The arc of this theory is to revolt against any kind of superficial restraints. It has obtained a stunning place in gender debates. By the time it didn't constrained itself to societal aspect rather became an irresistible subject for academic theorists. Whether it is feminism as a social movement or feminism as a literary theory, these are not distinct from each other; both try to seek gender inequalities and should not be taken mistakenly. Butler (2004) puts it thus,

Feminist theory is never fully distinct from feminism as a social movement. Feminist theory would have no content were there no movement, and the movement, in its various distinctions and forms, has always been involved in the act of theory. Theory is an activity that does not remain restricted to the academy. It takes place every time a possibility is imagined, a collective self-reflection takes place, a dispute over values, priorities, and language emerges (p.175).

Feminism as a movement is the result of unjustified and disqualified division between male and female in a society. It is a reaction against prevailing patriarchal practices as patriarchy is always there behind the unjust behavior towards women. Violence, segregation, subjugation, subordination and discrimination are some words that are used for the representation of women in society and feminism is an endeavor to eradicate these lower and inferior positions of women and to bring them up equal to man's superior positions.

Simon de Beauvoir (1974) is one of the most prominent exponents of women's rights. She has pinpointed the otherness of women in her landmarking book, *The Second Sex* in which her thesis centers on the issue of the existence of woman, and whether this existence matters or not for the rest of the society. In accordance with her

views woman is not more than a plaything or an object of sex. She is visionized through the lenses of man who take them as sexual beings, i.e. women representing sexuality while men representing humanity. So man is the subject of the world while woman is the object. They are thoroughly different from one another because society does so by placing and fixing their identities in so-called patriarchal and hierarchal system in which woman is the defective part of the perfect world of man. Simon de Beauvoir (1974) assigns this difference in masculine and feminine terms, as she puts it:

“The terms masculine and feminine are used symmetrically as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man presents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general, whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity” (p.12).

Debate over the status of women is never ended. This debate is featured by the discrimination towards women, whether this discrimination is based on sex or gender or any other controversial point.

Literature is the work of art that is actually the depiction of life of its characters and of society, in general. It represents a society's norms, culture, traditions and its social phenomena in a realistic manner. That's why people are fascinated by any work of literature as a matter of fact; it is the reflection of those people's lives (Zhang et al., 2022; Ajmal & Kumar, 2020).

There have always been host of opinions regarding feminism among literary critics, thinkers and theorists. In all its manifestations, feminism has tried to refuse patriarchal superiority over matriarchy and seeks to find sexual equality. Raman Selden is another critic who has said that feminism is a clear cut refusal to masculine authority in the society. According to her, “throughout its long history, feminism has sought to disturb the complacent certainties of such a patriarchal culture, to assert a belief in sexual equality and to eradicate sexual domination in transforming society” (Selden et al., 2005: p.115). She describes that feminism is challenging, extending by the time and is constantly in flux. In recent times everyone is aware of the purpose of his/her creation and wants the freedom of action and expression, feminism is a revolt against the suppression of this freedom which is denied to female lot of society.

Feminism assumed new shapes in every epoch as it is not likely the same as it was in its earlier stages. Literature has always been a major source in creating women's portrayals. Patriarchy was always there to define the opposite boundaries for male as superior and female as inferior one. Peter Berry, in the second edition of, “Beginning Theory” elaborated his views about the representation of women in literature. His main concern remains with “conditioning” and “socialization of women”. As he says that depiction of women in literature is also a form of socialization that depicted the acceptable positions for them in a society. (Berry, 2020; p. 122)

Feminism does not stand alone as a literary theory or movement. It relates itself to other school of thoughts also, as structuralism, post-structuralism, psycho-analysis or Marxism. In past times it was limited in approach but with the passage of time other departments of literary concern and social institutions started to think about the emerging voice and see the relevant issues to be further analyzed. Although the debate was domestic in nature thus not to be raised on international platform but its effects were creating troubles because any issue related to women could not be neglected for a long time of period. Terry Eagleton (1986) has propounded relative views about the subjugated position of women as emerging from social inequalities based on materialism.

Social and economic materialism has remained a dominant factor throughout the history and it has profoundly affected the condition of woman in a bitter way (Yang, et al., 2022; Pourshahian & Kumar, 2022). Terry Eagleton (1986), being a Marxist, relates feminism to Marxism and considers the unequal treatment to woman as a material reality that exists in a male dominated society.

In short, debate over the status of women never comes to an end, and taking into account the works reviewed above with certain unavoidable limitations, it is clear that Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress* and *The Garden* were looked upon from different perspectives and little attention has been given to examining them from a feminist point of view.. This debate is featured by the discrimination towards women, whether this discrimination is based on sex or gender or any other controversial point. Psychologists, especially psychoanalysts are agreed on the neurotic problems arising from inferiority complex or unfulfilled desires of a person and their studies regarding feminine issues are exclusively pervasive among literary masses who endeavour to perpetuate women superiority or even equality in order to get an even contribution in society on part of them.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is qualitative in nature and provides content analysis of Marvell's “*The Garden*” and “*To His Coy Mistress*”. To understand the true meaning and nature of feminism, this study focuses on word, sentence and language used by the poet. The two selected poems deal with the suffering of a woman as a result of living in a patriarchally oriented society. Therefore, the present study is conducted from a feminist standpoint. Here, the sociological approach to literature will be employed as it entails the prediction of the role of poetry, as a form of literature, as a medium of instruction. This approach shows that a work of art is didactic and its purpose should be teaching or giving instructions that may contribute to the improvement of any society. Here, the researcher will present the sufferings that young woman have to undergo in the context of a male-dominated society. This

study seeks to explore how the woman in “To His Coy Mistress” is torn between what her lover’s need form her regarding her beauty and her ailment because of her coyness in satisfying his need. She leads a life full of suffering and ailment distracted between her needs as a social being and her duty as a mistress who has to meet all the needs of her lover. In the other poem “The Garden”, the narrator has also to suffer the dehumanization at the hand of her male counterpart in their love relationship. The speaker in this poem prefers to spend time alone in Natural beauty rather than in women’s company. Simply, he underestimates her feminine beauty in comparison to the beauty of Nature. On the whole, the researcher will examine how women in the selected poems are victimized in the two poems as a result of living in a gender-based society.

4. DISCUSSION

Women’s liberation is the extreme thought that women are individuals. This type of basic examination of artistic sensibility rose in the late 1970s. The women’s activist abstract analysis of today is the immediate result of the women development of the 1960s. This development was abstract from the beginning, as it understood the centrality of the representations of women acknowledged by writing, and considered it to be indispensable to battle them. Set in elegant convention, it starts with overstated recognition and conciliating ‘demure’ fancy woman, however closes just in licentious welcome and externalization woman.

In this paper, the researchers have selected two representative poems of Andrew Marvell: “To His Coy Mistress” (1681) and “The Garden” (1681). A great number of feminists consider language and literature as a manifestation of patriarchy (Barry, 2020).

Starting with the interpretation of “To His Coy Mistress”, a Petrarchan convention love-poem through feministic ideology, it is said that this poem is based on the theme of ‘Carpe diem’. The poem starts with exaggerated praise and appeasing of the ‘coy’ mistress of the narrator. However the further movement of the lines shows glorification of lustful desire of female body and presentation of lady-love as mean of object. The poet has intertwined his obstinacy prudently in this poem, starting with captivating platonic promises and then by harsh sexual imagery. Interpreting this poem from feministic point of view is interesting as Marvell in spite of being a man writes for his opposite sex counterparts who are supposed to surrender to the male domination and start to think like a male. In the language of Judith Fetterley, such situation is “the emasculation of women by men. As readers, teachers and scholars, women are taught to think as men, to identify with a male point of view, and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values” (cited in Duyfhuizen; p.415).

Mackinnon (1982) wonderfully illustrates female as he considers “good girls”, “attractive” and bad “bad girls” as “provocative”. According to him, “gender socialization is the process through which women come to identify themselves as sexual beings, as beings that exist for men” (p.531). The poet depicts an attractive and coy mistress, however he points out her sexuality. Instead rejecting sexual urges in women, the poets give logical and justified interpretation. The form of this poem is a conventional style of syllogism. The argument is formulated in a purely logical manner with well-defined ending.

Patriarchy is alluded to in Andrew Marvell's poetry and throughout his literary works the female voice is often silenced. His most famous poem, “To His Coy Mistress”, reveals the gender inequality and patriarchal ideology that pits women and imposes certain gender rules on women. Marvell's mistress is said to be coy, which is characteristic of many women.

The poem asserts double constraints on the lady in the opening lines. Firstly, as a woman she has to preserve all the feminine characteristics such as discreet, attractive, subservient, reserved, and coyness. Secondly, she displeases and enrages those men who are supposed to be admired by her beauty if she does so.

“Had we but world enough, and time,

This coyness Lady were no crime”. (Margaret, 1996, lines: 1-2)

The poet condemns his mistress for being shy as it is a kind of hindrance in love making. It is critical that as long as women’s appearance meets men's desires, he don’t object. But when this feminine feature of coyness obstructs sexual fulfillment, she is criticized for this. Marvell derives here an implication that if love/beauty has not been consummated, the power of love/beauty is lost. It is ironical that woman is considered to a sex object, to be used for men. MacKinnon's aptly says, “the organized expropriation of the sexuality of some for the use of others defines the sex, woman”. Praising her beauty is essential part of love but the ultimate part is consummation. The poet considers praise as ‘vegetative love’, which will develop gradually and magnificently. It is quite natural and certain so it should not hinder the passion of love. The poem is divided into three sections, and every segment narrates his increasing dissatisfaction and restlessness for lust. This poem is written per the ‘courtly love’ fashion and attempts to convert his beloved lady to himself in the Petrarchan style:

“An hundred years should go to praise

Thine eyes . . .

. . . Two hundred to adore each breast . . .

. . . And the last age should show your heart.”

(Margaret, 1996, lines: 13-18)

The description above says that the beloved is reduced to mere parts. The poem well illustrates the identity crisis of women. Women's sexuality is not about their physical aspects. It is not meant for the description of their physical beauty. MacKinnon (1982) appropriately mentions her essay, "Is women's identity its absence?" The poet becomes philosophic, when his beloved didn't manipulated by his praises. He tries to convince through life philosophy that death is an unavoidable fact, and life a temporary. He is certain that his beloved would be puzzled by his intellectual philosophy that the longing of living good life may convince her to have sex with him. Unfortunately, he failed in his attempts to provoke her desire and he leveled his beloved with the word 'coy' and other words, which can be called 'textual harassment'. The poem "To His Coy Mistress" reflects life's reality. It is prevailed social reality that if men fail in their attempt to woo women, they use a scornful expression for her. The consequence of such an uncontrolled surge of hormones is rape, acid attacks, and abuse of women. The kind of love the poet is obsessed with, is not romantic love but a kind of physical love. In the end of the poem, the poet seems to violate civility and moral norms for women by making disparaging remarks for her.

"... then worms shall try

That long preserved virginity:

And your quaint honour turn to dust," (Margaret, 1996, lines: 27-29)

The speaker demonstrates an extreme disgust with the female body in the above lines and equates it with death, disease, and decay. The idea that women's virginity can be damaged by worms is just pathetic, demeaning, and horrifying.

The poet cum speaker mocks her virginity as "quaint honour" rather than upholding the dignity. His coy mistress is humanized and violates the longstanding courteous love convention of praising and worshipping her. Marvell envisions his lady-love as having a destructive and unleashed power (Craze, 1979).

"At every pore with instant fires . . .

let us sport us while we may

And now, like amorous birds of prey,

Rather at once our time devour..." (Margaret, 1996, lines: 36-39)

And then again in the above lines, women's struggle for identity is clear. Love-making has been presented as cold, mechanical and hateful. The deployment of animal imagery only serves to enhance the severity of the effect. By using the image of sexual consumption "like amorous birds of prey", the poet desensitizes readers to the reality of the sexual violence.

The poet doesn't seem to present women human beings or companion of men. The female voice has no place in the poet's verse of love making. The lustful appeal of Marvell in the following lines "Let us roll all our strength and all/Our sweetness, up in one ball:/And tear our pleasures with rough strife" (Margaret, 1996, lines: 41-43) conjure up accusatory and ecstasy scream.

The vicious portrayal of women in the poem is the outcome another identity crisis called class conflict in the society. The kind of themes, topics, and treatment reminds the Victorian Era in British literature, where women started getting free recognition after rejection and criticism (Kumar, 2020). MacKinnon (1982) believed that "women of different social class have different socio-sexual experiences". Exposure of physical attributes and sexual lust was a common phenomenon among the women of high stratum of the society. And the same was portrayed in the courtly poetry of the time. According to MacKinnon (1982), the sexual liberation cannot be achieved because Sexuality is perceived socially. It is society oriented concept. He emphasizes how social conditioning is more influential than biology or sexuality. Simon De Beauvoir (1974) too enumerates, "one is not born rather becomes a woman". This suggests that women's constructed sexuality is for the needs of men of the time and to satisfy their desires. Marvell's poems correspond to a time when lustful desires were the norm on the stage. Such a portrayal of women is what Marvell's society would have supported and somewhat sought. He diminishes female beauty in comparison to the beauty of Nature.

The second poem taken for the study is feminist reading of Andrew Marvell's "The Garden" (1681). This is one of the poems by Marvell that deals with misogynistic tendencies. The speaker in this poem prefers to spend time alone in Natural beauty rather than in women's company. Such a portrayal of women is what Marvell's society would have supported and somewhat sought. He diminishes female beauty in comparison to the beauty of Nature. The poet romanticizes Nature and considers it superior to women's sexuality. He describes thus:

"No white nor red was ever seen

So am'rous as this lovely green."

(Margaret, 1996, lines: "The Garden", lines: 16-17)

Marvell's "The Garden" was composed during his stay at Appleton's in the countryside of Lord Fairfax. This poem is not therefore regarded as an imaginative work, but as a remembrance of personal and psychosomatic experiences profoundly embedded in truth and faith. He calls this poem "the valorization of authentic".

The poet taunts lovers, in a humorous and sarcastic way, who are unaware of the beauty of the garden. He gives reference of God to justify his point. He mentions that Apollo and Pan sought to capture the hearts of Daphne

and Syrinx, respectively not because of their physical desire. They chased these two nymphs because they potential trees having magnificence of a greenery attributes.

“The Garden” is a significant poem from feministic point of view because he doesn’t give direct description of female sexuality. In this poem, Nature is personified as women and engages in a sexually evocative relationship with the garden that serves the women in male sex drives (Hyman, 1958).

The poem is full of sexism and licentious thoughts, addressing stereotypical women and their actions. The delineation of fruits in stanza-v succeeds in making provocative sexuality more natural. These lines appeal to readers' senses and appeal through tone. As readers go along these lines, “Ripe apples drop about my head;/The luscious clusters of the vine/Upon my mouth do crush their wine;/The nectarine and curious peach/Into my hands themselves do reach;/Stumbling on melons as I pass (Margaret, 1996; lines:34-39)”, their mouths begin watering. Thus, the poem has romanticized in its own ways.

The poem condemns women and establishes a world without them. He gives reference of Eden garden and considers it the happiest place when it was free of women. According to Marvell, Adam was twice blessed when he was alone in Eden: First, the beauty of the garden, and second, the serenity of garden. Abandoning a woman to such a degree conveys hatred for women to its full. The poet describes his standpoints here in the following lines:

“Such was that happy Garden-state,
While Man there walked around a mate . . .
. . . Regardless, 'twas past a human's offer
To wander single there:
Two sky 'twere in one
To live in Paradise alone.”

(Margaret, 1996, lines: 57-64)

Jacques Lacan propounded the use misogynistic tendencies in literature. This philosophy is echoed in the poem “The Garden” by well-known critic Frank Kermode (1952). In Lacanian terms the ‘other’ is an affirmation that women are still bound and governed by men. Lacan gives reference from the religious epic The Bible. God, according to him, had created Eve out of Adam’s ribs. So it is obvious that Eve is inferior to Adam (The Holy Bible, Genesis 2:22). Taking cue from this ideology, Kermode (1952) also describes in the study of Marvell’s poem that authority and supremacy are bestowed upon Adam as Eve is only considered as outsider. The speaker in the poem “The Garden” has shown a clear bias against women. He has suggested avoiding female love and companionship and beseeching solitude. In discussing the poetry of Marvell, critics including Hollander and Kermode (1973) have opposed such representation and power dominance in favour of men. They raised questions why the Marvellian women were never bestowed with any strength. Further, MacKinnon (2014) goes to the extent saying that women even don’t have the freedom to express sexuality. He says: “Sexuality is a form of power, and women are those people whose sexuality is expropriated and used by others. Women are walking embodiments of men's projected needs”.

5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, it is quite clear that Marvell’s poetry has strong misogynist features. The present study provides solutions for the dilemma of women as wives and mothers or even lovers in a given society in general and their dilemma under oppressive forces in particular. This study also provides solutions and new insights about the statuses of women and how they are oppressed and demeaned in a male-dominant society. The solutions lie in giving space to each individual to value women’s roles as wives, mothers or lovers in light of whatever circumstances or hardships they face. The poet has tried to achieve male superiority is accomplished by the use of both metaphor and allusion in witty language. Marvell’s selected poems provide plethora of examples where gluttonous needs are above fulfillment of ladies in equivalent status. Debate over the status of women is never ending. This debate is featured by the discrimination towards women, whether this discrimination is based on sex or gender or any other controversial point. Women have been treated as sex objects and at the same time they have been humiliated and insulted verbally.

The poem delves into the challenges a woman faces throughout because of her sexuality, identity and chastity. Sexuality is a kind of power, and women are those individuals whose sexuality is reallocated and utilized by others. They are strolling encapsulations of men’s predicted needs. The joy about having sex is greater than the real experience of falling in love. Through these poems, the poet asserts that the woman is abandoned to enjoy happiness. Marvell has exchanged all the ability to his male speaker, leaving the female way of life as something to be utilized to satisfy men’s anticipated needs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This project was supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University under the research project (PSAU- 2022/02/19813)

REFERENCES

1. Ajmal, M., & Kumar, T. (2020). Inculcating learners' listening motivation in English language teaching: A case study of British education and training system. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*. 11(4), 409-425. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11 no: 4.26>
2. Barry, P. (2020). *Feminist criticism. Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Viva Books Private Limited. pp. 116-117.
3. Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing Gender*. New York/London: Routledge.
4. Craze, M. (1979). *The Life and Lyrics of Andrew Marvell*. London: Macmillan.
5. Davies, C. (1996). The Sociology of professions and the profession of gender. *Sociology*, 30(4). pp. 661-678. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038596030004003>.
6. De Beauvoir, S. (1974). *Le deuxième sexe*. Paris: Gallimard, 1949. Translated by H. M. Parshley as *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books.
7. Duyfhuizen, B. (2014). Textual Harassment of Marvell's *Coy Mistress*: The Institutionalization of masculine criticism. *College Edition*, Vol. 50.
8. Eagleton, T. (ed.). (1986). *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*, Basil Blackwell.
9. Hollander, J., & Kermode, F. (1973). *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature* (ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
10. Holy Bible, Reference Edition King James Version (n.d.). King James Bible Online. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org>
11. Hyman, L. W. (1958). Marvell's Garden. *English Literary History*: 25(1).
12. Jabeen, T., Kumar, T., & Yunus, M. M. (2022). Fathers, daughters, and domesticity in the early novels of George Eliot. *SAGE Open*. . doi:10.1177/21582440221113821
13. Kermode, F. (1952). The argument of Marvell's 'Garden'. *Essays in Criticism*, Volume II, Issue 3. pp. 225-241. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/eic/II.3.225>
14. Kumar, T. (2017). A critical evaluation of the politics of patriarchy and gender role in Mahesh Dattani's play, where there's a will. *Ars Artium: An International Peer Reviewed-cum-Refereed Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol. 5, 53-57. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4280128>
15. Kumar, T. (2020). Representation of victorian society in the poetry of Mary Howitt. *Utopia y Praxis Latinoamericana*. 25 (12), 215-221. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4280128>.
16. Kumar, T. (2021). The culture of patriarchy, gender bias, and class discrimination in Mahesh Dattani's *Tara*. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5 (S1), 60 - 69. <https://doi.org/10.37028/lingcure.v5nS1.1314>
17. MacKinnon, C. (1982). Feminism, Marxism, method, and the state: An agenda for theory. *Feminist Theory*, Vol. 7. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173853>
18. Margaret, F. et. al. (1996). *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. New York.
19. Meyers, Diana.(2011) "Feminist Perspectives on the Self." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed Edward N. Zalta. Web. Accessed January 15, 2022. <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2010/entries/feminism-self/>>
20. Millett, K. (1990). *The Loony-Bin Trip*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
21. Pourshahian , B. & Kumar, T. (2022). An Investigation into the Semantic/Syntactic Weaknesses and Strengths of Tourist Brochures in Zandiyeh Complex Based on Napu (2016). *Education Research International*, Volume 2022, Article ID 2936083, 6 pages <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/2936083>
22. Ritzer, G. (ed.). (2004). *Contemporary feminist theory*. *Sociological Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
23. Selden, R., Widdowson, P., & Brooker, P. (2005). *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 5th edition. London: Pearson Education Limited.
24. Yang, X., Hussain Qureshi, A., Kuo, Y.K., Quynh, N.N., Kumar, T. & Wisetsri, W. (2022). Teachers' value consonance and employee-based brand equity: the mediating role of belongingness and self-efficacy. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 13:900972. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.900972
25. Zhang, D., Akhter, S., Kumar, T. & Nguyen, N. T. (2022). Lack of emotional experience, resistance to innovation, and dissatisfied musicians influence on music unattractive education. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13:922400. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.922400