



**Repression, Isolation and Paranoia: A Psychoanalytic Feminist Study of ‘The Nightmare’
by Rukhsana Ahmad**

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Abstract

Generally, literature written by Pakistani women writers in English depicts women as victims of patriarchy, social and cultural oppression. Meanwhile, in recent times the short fiction is exploring new paradigms related to the psychological oppression of married women in Pakistan. The following paper selects the short story, ‘*The Nightmare*’ by Pakistani writer, Rukhsana Ahmad, where a housewife suffers from paranoia because of disconsolate marriage. Therefore, this research aims to study the causes of psychological disorders specifically paranoia among apparently happy housewives. Moreover, the causes and effects of repression and isolation on personality of women would be discussed from the psychoanalytic feminist perspective using the framework of Sigmund Freud (1973- 86) through the character of *Fariha*. Through the method of character analysis (Dobie, 2011) this paper concludes that the childhood experiences of repression are the reason for victim’s passiveness towards psychological oppression during adult life. This paper would also help in establishing the conclusion that women who suffer abuse in their childhood are more likely to face abuse in their adult lives, which becomes the cause of their psychological instability.

Key Words: Short Fiction, Pakistani women, Paranoia, Housewives, isolation, unconscious, symbols, psychological abuse.

1 Introduction

Short stories are popular form of literature; despite being popular it is one of the most neglected areas in research studies. One of the reasons for this negligence is short length and exclusion of details in this genre. So, most researchers in field of literary criticism prefer to work on either longer fiction or poetry. While this research is particularly focused on short stories the significance of short story has been highlighted by researchers and theorists (James, 1898; Hunter, 2007). Hunter in his book, *Cambridge Introduction to Short story in English* (2007) explains the origin of Short story with often prevalent misconceptions about its structure and content. By giving the example of Henry James (1898), Hunter says that instead of comparing its structure to a novel and considering it a small extract from long narrative one must think of it as a text which “suggests and implies meaning, rather than stating it directly” (James, 1898, p.652-3), what these theorists saw in short story was the “great richness and complexity- or multiplicity, because of rather than despite, its brevity” (Hunter, 2007, p.2). Though brief, short stories can convey much more with respect to both, form and content.



Short story as a genre of fiction has always been much more than “matter of form and technique”, the connection between brevity and complexity however as explained by Hunter (2007) is “the art of saying less yet meaning more”. Many writers were interested in short stories including G. K. Chesterton who considered short story to be the reflection of “fleetingness and fragility of modern life” (Chesterton, 1906, p.69). A South African writer, Nadine Gordimer (1968) in comparison of short story and novel says,

Novelist juggles about with chronology, and all the time his characters have readers by hand, here the consistency of relationship does not convey quality of human life, and contact is more like flash of fire flies. Short story writers, however, see by the light of flash, theirs is the art of only thing- the present moment. They have learnt to do without explanation of what happened before and beyond that point. (p.459)

Here we can see how important short story is in terms of its content rather than structure. Therefore, the focus of this research would be on the content of the stories.

1.1 Brief Introduction of Selected Text and Writer

The paper is based on the short story ‘*The Nightmare*’, written by Pakistani female writer Rukhsana Ahmad, published in her short story collection, *The Gatekeeper’s Wife* (2014). One of the feminist writers, Rukhsana Ahmad has been nominated for several awards including “Writers’ Guild” and “Susan Smith Blackburn Prize”. Even though Ahmad is the writer of two novels, her short stories being widely anthologized are the reason of her popularity within literary circles of South Asia and Pakistan.

The stories included in 2014 collection, ‘*The Gatekeepers wife*’ are twelve tales of women from across Pakistan. Therefore, narratives from both rural and urban cultures have been included while the accounts of Pakistani immigrants living in western societies did not get ignored. The selected short story ‘*The Nightmare*’ is about the whole life of a woman named *Fariha*, belonging to a humble background, who suffers from severe psychological disorder ‘Paranoia’. Further, as the story proceeds, the causes of her condition are unveiled in the form of hints dropped by the writer playfully. Psychological abuse of *Fariha* being one of the major themes of story is investigated through psychoanalysis of the protagonist in this paper.

1.2 Research Questions

- 1 What are the causes of *Fariha*’s repression and isolation within and outside marriage relationship in the selected short story ‘The Nightmare’?
- 2 What is the role of *Fariha*’s immediate family and childhood experiences in her repression and mental illness with reference to selected fiction?
- 3 What is the significance of title of selected fiction with reference to *Fariha*’s recurrent dream?



1.3 Research Objective

The main objective of this research is to investigate the causes and effects of psychological repression through unconscious (dream and recollections) of the protagonist in selected short story ‘*The Nightmare*’ by Rukhsana Ahamd.

2 Literature Review/Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research includes both the theory of psychoanalysis and feminism. The psychoanalytic theory of sexuality given by Freud (1973-86) in his thirteen volumes of research on human mind, unconscious and sexuality is the basic framework used for this research. The most controversial, most debated yet most important essay on unconscious by Freud (1973) include detailed notes on “existence of unconscious”, conscious and subconscious which are responsible for construction of human identity. Unconscious as suggested by Freud is that part of human psyche which remains unidentified. This part of human thinking is hidden not only from the society but from the individual him/herself. Tyson (2006) talks about Freudian concept of unconscious and describes it as “the notion human beings are motivated, even driven, by desires, fears, needs and conflicts of which they are unaware” (p.12). The unconscious according to Freud (1973) and Lacan (1977) is the “storehouse of all the painful experiences and emotions” other than painful experiences it also consists of an individual wound “guilty desires and unsolved conflicts” (p.12-13). The unconscious part of human personality comes into existence through various repressions and unhappy events of life. Tyson (2006) in his explanation of psychoanalytic theory says that family plays the most crucial role in psychological development of individuals specially females as “we are each the product of role we are given in family-complex” (p.13). Through the experiences of our relationships in families all of us built our identities. The Oedipal complex another important idea given by Freud as quoted by Tyson involves our sexual attachment with parent of opposite gender which further influences our sexual relationships and complex desires.

2.1 Conscious Vs Unconscious

The symbols and images stand for something as pointed out by Qazi (2011), the unconscious symbolism depend on word play, puns, or sometimes actions (p.3). The meanings of these verbal or symbolic signs are always delayed and remain understood as per the theory of structuralism given by Derrida. Habib (2008) focused in his study on the “imaginary stage” the stage where the unconscious of the child is developed. Solms (2000) while working on the modern dream theory referred towards the dream analysis theory of Freud as he states, “unconscious wishes through dreams are transformed into conscious images” (p.618). He further explains that multiple mechanisms such as “displacement, condensation and regression” are often at work in the process of dreaming. Cheniaux (2006), says that there is always a tension between conscious and unconscious and thus the dreams are in the form of symbols, i.e. hidden and unrecognizable (p, 3-4). Another critic Blechner (1998) says that dreams may or may not be the repressed desires of individuals but most of the time they represent the unspoken ideas, the thoughts unexpressed. It means that dreams can be some repressed desires i.e. the fears and anxieties or even childhood



memories. Siegal (2001) and Fosse et al. (2003) carried out similar researches where they found out that memories do play a very significant role in construction of unconscious. Crick (1983) on the other hand, argued that dreams consist not on the “memories that are consolidated but on those which are being erased” (p.) i.e. the unconscious.

2.2 Psychoanalytic Feminist Theorists

Theorists including Deborah L. Madsen (2000), Julie Rivkin & Michael Ryan (2004) and Lois Tyson (2006) talked about the new approach towards literary analysis, psychoanalytic feminism. Madsen (2000) in her book says that the psychoanalytic feminists ask the question about the gendered identities of women and how one becomes a woman, i.e. the processes involved in one’s journey. With reference to Freudian concept of oedipal stage, she argues that, this development stage is much more complex for girls as compared to boys. Gillian (1982), a famous psychoanalytic feminist critic, criticized the work of Freud by saying that all the biological theories exclude the differences of women to some or mostly large extent. She indicated us towards many aspects where Freud’s theory was gender biased and thus reinforces patriarchy (Gillian, 1982. P.7). The female attributes such as sensitivity, confusion, uncertainty which are considered as the signs of weakness must not be seen negatively, as Gillian suggests that these elements can be taken as part of their morality, the values of women are much different than men. As men celebrate individuality, women tend to protect the relationships (Madsen, 2000, p.101). As the previously mentioned theorists tend to imply the differences in nature of men and women, Flax (1983, p.218) says otherwise. She claims that, ‘mother is the one who ensures the reproduction of patriarchy’. Women are as much responsible for their oppression as men, as they are not only physically oppressed but psychologically programmed to pass on patriarchy to their coming generation.

Purpose/Justification of the Research

The paper aims to explore the causes and effects of severe psychological disorders among women such as Paranoia through psychoanalysis of the protagonist in selected short fiction. This paper intends to explore the issues regarding psychological disorders and sufferings of women. The subject holds significance as it affects the quality of life of any society. Emotional and psychological wellbeing. As Psychological repression is an invisible form of abuse; thus, it is often quite difficult to deal with such theme within literature, as well as literary criticism. However, with the emergence of such themes in Pakistani short fiction there is need to explore psychological aspects of feminism from literary perspective.

4 Research Methodology

The method of character analysis is used for the analysis of selected short fiction according to the requirements of research objectives. As psychoanalysis of the protagonist is indicated to be one of the most appropriate methods of analysis in psychoanalytic criticism by Dobie (2011) in her book *Theory into Practice*. For psychoanalysis, the unconscious of the protagonist would be investigated. The unconscious according to Freud includes dreams, memories, childhood



experiences and symbols. All these elements which are induced in the selected text are going to be selected for analysis. Character analysis is one of the three methods of research in psychoanalytic criticism of literature, as pointed out by Dobie (2011). However, the character analysis in literary research is different from the character assessment in field of psychology. Therefore, instead of focusing on the elements of character the character would be approached through its description and participation in the events of the story.

For analysis purpose, three major aspects of *Fariha*'s character, such as her character descriptions, her childhood experiences included in text and symbolic significance of her dreams would be analyzed and interpreted

- 1- Interpretation of her dream
- 2- Interpretation of her childhood and
- 3- Interpretation of her adult life (post marriage).

Other than these elements, the interpretation of *Fariha*'s name, title of the short story are included as well. These interpretations will be helpful in understanding the major theme of the text.

5 Textual Analysis

The short story "the nightmare" written by Rukhsana Ahmad is unique with respect to the themes it explores. The story basically is about a married Pakistani woman, who suffers from mental health issues, specifically paranoia. She is in the delusional state where she had completely lost the sense of reality and dream. Her imagination plays a very important role in description of her psychological state of mind, whereas the memories and few recollections of childhood, being an important aspect of psychoanalysis would help in understanding of her repression.

5.1 Name Interpretation

The story revolves around a female character named *Fariha*, which is from Arabic origin; the meaning of *Fariha* is Happy/Content. However, quite opposite to the circumstances of protagonist her name presents an irony for readers. The appearances may suggest that she had a content life, the people of society even her parents are unable to see her miseries. As *Fariha* has never been physically abused by her husband, she did not suffer from poverty and bore male children. Consequently, she is the luckiest and happiest a woman can ever be. The psychological and emotional abuse she suffered for a long time is not considered to be the matter of significance as she did not have bruises and cuts to show. For instance, the nurse in the very first few lines sympathized with *Fariha*'s husband as she was suffering from psychological disorder instead of trying to understand the causes of her state.

5.2 Title Interpretation

The title of the story itself is very interesting "The nightmare" which refers towards bad or unpleasant dream which frightens a sleeping person. Dreams according to Freud's dream interpretation theory are part of our unconscious which in the form of symbols is presented through



dreams. A bad dream, rather a frightening one creates imagery in the mind of reader about unsettling situation, an anxiety or terror. The nightmare is the symbol of terror, horror, agony and misery. From the very first line of the story reader comes to know that the story is about a female character that is in delusion as she could not answer the nurse about the question, a very simple question. She is anxious, worried, insecure and upright as she could not remember her own name her feeling at that moment is captured by writer with the use of imagery of darkness “the question worried her as it penetrated through dark veils of numbness” (p.79). The word numbness here is of great significance as it refers towards the insensitive state where a person is unable to feel or understand anything; it is a sleep like state, rather death. The imagery presented in the very title to first line of the story as well as title give readers an idea about the suffering and pain protagonist is going through.

5.3 Dream Interpretation

The dream in the story represents a cluster of ideas, many symbols are being used by writer and Freud’s dream theory is seen at work through the nightmares of *Fariha*. The dream which is the cause of her paranoiac behavior is the perfect example of displacement and condensation. Displacement being the process where one image stands for another situation and condensation is the conflict which occurs inside the dream after the recollection of dream the symbols may represent multiple images, multiple situations and people from real life while conflicts (condensations) may represent your fears and problems with those people or things. The dream, rather nightmare repeatedly seen by *Fariha* while she was unconscious (asleep) as well as in her conscious (visions) as described by Salim was

...something about two birds... a huge, vicious-looking vulture and a trembly little dove. The vulture kept pecking the dove’s wing with its sharp beak, but the dove wouldn’t move couldn’t get away. It just stood there mesmerized, submitting to it... (p.82)

The imagery of two birds, represent the conflict. One being much more powerful than other asserts its power on other and other being weak and smaller is getting hurt. The helplessness of the smaller bird, the weaker one results in submission. The later part of this conversation reveals that now *Fariha* thinks “*she is the dove*” (p.82). the psychological instability of *Fariha*, the protagonist of selected text is described through this image in her delusions. The displacement of images, in case of dove and vulture hint us towards another interpretation of this nightmare, a more explicit one. As Freud (1915) claimed ‘dreams and symbols’ to be the “representation of one’s unconscious mind” therefore through analysis of dream we can get hold on to the unconscious sufferings of *Fariha*.

Each image in her dream is a symbol, a symbol of another situation or person, a conflict. The major symbols of the dream are “trembly, little dove”, “a huge vicious looking vulture”, “dove’s wing”, “sharp beak” and “shoulder”. In the earlier part where *Fariha* in her consciousness experienced



this dream, an illusion and described the whole conflict among the symbolic birds dove and vulture to Nurse as “his sharp was hard, so hard... it plunged deeper each time drawing blood, I couldn’t move, couldn’t do anything” the imagery of “hard beak” “plunging, drawing blood” and repeated “helplessness” are included among other images to be interpreted (Ahmad, 2014: pp.82-83).

5.3.1 Symbols and Images in Dreams

Two major images dove and vulture in terms of literature carry a lot of significance, according to *The Dictionary of Literary Symbols* by Michael Ferber “dove is the symbol of love” the Greek and romans recognize dove as the goddess of love, whereas dove is also recognized for its “gentle cooing, faithfulness to mates, gentleness, innocence, timidity and peace” (p.61-62). Likewise, dove other than being the symbol of peace is also the symbol of beauty, spring and gentleness. The association of *Fariha* to his bird and identifying herself with dove carries a lot of significance as apparent through the symbolic interpretation of dove as a symbol. The character and personality of *Fariha* is that of a dove, who prefers peace, thus make many compromises to maintain it. Her role as a mother and house wife is that of a nurturer and care taker, furthermore she is the innocent and faithful creature, who despite being unhappy cannot walk away, or leave her master, the person who controls her life.

Another major symbol used in the story is Vulture. Contrary to the delicate and sensitive image of dove, vulture instead is a very large bird, who is physically very resentful and eat dead animals, vulture belong to the family of hawks, eagles and falcons whose usual prey is dove (Ferber, 2007: p.95-96). Other than this a vulture stands for a very deceptive and beguiling person who takes advantage of others, who is already weak, or in very bad condition.

Nevertheless, vulture if used for a human being also carries the meanings of “rapacious or predatory person”. Other synonyms for vulture are “bloodsucker, buzzard, harpy, predator” etc. as provided in oxford dictionary. The interpretation of dream at surface level reveals that *Fariha* assimilates her own painful experiences and repressed tormented sexuality to these images of dove and vulture. She herself is the fearful, weak, fragile and helpless dove, whose job is to bring happiness, and love everyone. On the contrary the imagery of vulture may represent her husband, as a bloodsucking predator, who for her whole life used her sexuality and then her physical labor to take care of house and children. She was the one to bear him babies and raised them for ten long years alone while he was abroad “away from the comforts of home” while she was the one providing comfort to his children educating and nurturing them with her precious life.

5.4 Psychological Abuse in *Fariha*’s Childhood

There are several occasions within the story where *Fariha*’s childhood has been referred to, including her memories of childhood experiences, her relationship with her parents, role of her mother and an account of incestuous childhood sexual abuse which her subconscious seem to remember occasionally.



5.4.1. Childhood Memories and Experiences

As she tries to remember a childhood memory came in, her mother scolding her, on being dirty. Psychoanalytic method of analysis given by Dobie () includes interpretation of childhood experiences and memories as one of the most significant parts. Therefore, each image remembered by protagonist and had any link with her memories holds significance in case of psychoanalysis of her character. The way of scolding she remembered was in a form of warning, a threat “Now go and wash your hands and face before your father gets here” (Ahmad, 2014, p.79). The argument of Kristeva on sex and gender is important here as gender roles define attitude of people, even parents the character of *Fariha*’s mother as shown is representation of the patriarchal society of Pakistan and conventional roles of parents. Females being associated with the concept of house work are expected to clean, the brother who was as dirty as “Faro” being male was not scolded by mother. Here we can see the personalities of both *Fariha*’s mother and father, i.e. an authoritative male, who is the leader of her family and a housewife who stays at home and take care of her children and responsible for cleaning, cooking and child care. The relationship of *Fariha* with her father and her father’s role in family is explicitly described through the next line “Don’t let me catch anyone calling her anything else but by her proper name” (Ahmad 2014, p.79). She is attracted towards her father as he is the authority, she fears him for his power in the family and he is the male standard in front of her since childhood.

5.4.2. Role of *Fariha*’s Parents

The confusion when she looks for her father and finds her husband is rather very important as Freudian theory says that children are attracted towards the parents of opposite gender and try to substitute them for their whole lives in form of their romantic partners. “Her father was not there anymore. Her husband Salim was saying these words” (Ahmad, 2014: p.79) also indicate towards another aspect of patriarchy where men are in control of everything and females are transferred such as commodities from one being to another. These male members can call them by whatever names they want to as Salim says to the nurse “I like to call her fairy, that’s my special name for her” (Ahmad, 2014: p.79). The patriarchal system which from the very childhood plays its role in establishing the identities based on gender and confine women to inferior roles where they must play part of submissive. The role of *Fariha*’s mother as ascribed by Irigaray (1985) is of the submissive woman rather than passive one. She accepted her inferior role being a woman and raised *Fariha* on the similar guidelines.

Another of *Fariha*’s memory was about her mother’s golden advice about marriage; the secret of happy married life is only in the part of woman. As she advises her daughter “Marriages can’t work without any effort. You must work at them. A man is like a vessel, hard and unchanging, and a good woman should be like water, should flow and adapt herself to his shape” (Ahmad, 2014: p.80). Here in these lines we as readers come to understand the situation *Fariha* has been living in. being a married woman she must implement her mother’s rules and lose herself, her identity, her



conscious so that she can become acceptable for her husband. The description of “good woman” as given by her mother is also important with respect to the unconscious and psychological instability of *Fariha* in present time. The repression of her desires, from her very childhood was one of the major causes of her depression, anxieties and paranoia. As Freud says that the experiences of childhood become part of our conscious as well as unconscious and develop our personality *Fariha* due to such teachings of her mother could not revolt. She as told by her mother lost herself in her unhappy marriage.

5.4.3. Childhood Sexual Abuse

The hard beak, and pecking’s of vulture represent the sexual experiences and exploitation in the hands of her husband when she “*couldn’t move, couldn’t get away*”. Her abortion and humiliating sexual experiences were the cause of such imagery when she wanted to resent her husband, wanted to tell him to stop, shout at him, and express her anger at such disgrace of herself. She suffered from marital rape which is often not considered the matter of attention in our society, so she suffered silently, in isolation and it made her conscious as well as unconscious resentful towards sexuality. The bleeding shoulder represent her painful experiences in sexual life the sore wounds, aching her insides. Other than her husband vulture can also be the distant relative “uncle Jamal” who sexually assaulted her in her childhood, he molested her, and asked her to keep it a secret. He was an old man, as his “*old, dry fingers*” used to touch her inappropriately. Thus, he can also be the symbolic representation in the form of a hideous, grotesque “*vicious looking*” animal vulture. His inappropriate touch used to “*hurt her deep inside*” (p.80) i.e. drawing blood, making her suffer. This sexual assault in her childhood is also part of her unconscious and reason of her fear from sexual intimacy. She associated this experience and kept on remembering and comparing it with her marital relationship. It can be one of the reason she could not enjoy her life and become happy and content as she thought of it as “*all wrong and dirty*” (p.80). Meanwhile she had a lot of secrets to herself, of such sort she could not share with anyone. The exposure of these secrets is one of the burdens on her conscious which played important role in her isolation and repression.

5.4.4. Repressed Emotions

During time when she was being sexually abused by her uncle in her adolescent age, she did not dare tell her parents about her assault. She was old enough to understand that it was all wrong and dirty and it hurts. She could not tell her parents and kept on worrying, asking she a question “what if someone finds out?” (p.80). this act again raises a lot of questions in the minds of readers, what was she scared of? Did she think it was her fault that she was molested? What would have happened if her parents found out? And many more. Despite being the victim of sexual abuse, she did not have enough courage to tell her parents. Consequently, it indicates the lack of confidence, she had in her parents and herself. Her parents, like most of the parents in patriarchal Pakistani society did not give her enough courage to stand up against injustice.



Furthermore, she was scared even to share it with her mother, in Pakistan girls are being blamed for their misfortunes, likewise she was punished for the things she was not responsible for resulting in the loss of her confidence in her parents. Given the reaction of most parents when they come to know someone is molesting, teasing or chasing their daughter they would have blamed her for not stopping him, not telling them, going near that molester. Consequently, they would become highly protective of their daughter not allowing her to do anything on her own, go anywhere she wants. Given the consequences she found it easier to keep it from her parents and endure the pain of sexual abuse instead of getting punished by her parents for the crime she did not commit.

5.5 Psychological Oppression after Marriage

Psychological oppression of *Fariha* continued in her adult life, even after her marriage she was psychologically abused by her partner as she was obligated to repress her emotions and desires. Meanwhile she was also the victim of isolation and sexual abuse within her marriage.

5.5.1 Repressed Emotions and Desires

Salim, *Fariha's* husband was hard and unchanging as a vessel. She was in continuous state of conflict with reference to her sexual desires, i.e., her ID and super ego. She could not take any pleasure inside the sexual relationship with her husband, she was used by her husband for the sake of his pleasure and satisfaction whereas she remained unhappy, being angry at her mother and society for making her this way. During such encounters she felt anger towards everyone and her mother who told her to “yield” but she could not express her anger, her depression, her sadness and dissatisfaction with the circumstances. Meanwhile she kept asking herself and no one else “would she break if she didn’t yield? Must she yield even when her whole being revolted against the slithery panting thrusts” (p.80). The sexual desires being never fulfilled made her marriage an unbearable burden. All these repressed desires and frustrations were cause of her present situation, where she suffers from paranoia.

5.5.2 Isolation

After calling them all to America Salim was disappointed to see his wife, *Fariha* as she was no more beautiful, as a dove is supposed to be. “She looked... fat. He had hesitated over the word then. And so much older than she should have” (p.82). The faithfulness of *Fariha*, her hard work for ten long years went unacknowledged by her husband and the only thing which mattered to him was her physical appearance and he felt “shocked” and “betrayed”. Just as vulture when she was useless he threw her away in an asylum where she was aware of her “bareness”, her uselessness. Now the children grew up, and Salim wanted to shift, for a brand-new job, with his children. His last words to *Fariha* were “*they’re older now, they’ll miss you, but I think they will manage*” (p.86). She knew she was useless and thus she accepted her fate, just as the dove in her nightmares “she was mesmerized” and submitted. She wanted to forget everything, every suffering of her life as she realized her worthlessness sitting on the hospital bench looking at rootless trees “barren, like I have become, unable to produce a baby, when I so needed one.



What's a woman worth if she can't even bear children? She could hear ma and nani" (p.85). This memory again takes us towards the gender identity and childhood experiences, the fears and repressions of her unconscious which were made part of her personality through these teachings, these unconscious statements. The anxieties which later made her a psycho patient could be traced back to her childhood, the early years of her growth and identity formation.

5.5.3 Sexual Abuse in Marriage

Another feeling every woman want from her married life is intimacy and being desired, so that she can feel important, meanwhile it was not the case for *Fariha*, as her encounters with her husband were "urgent" and "businesslike" as it was "the way of getting babies" (p.80). the exploitation of female sexuality is the matter of routine for men such as Salim, who marry so that they can get someone to take care of their house, bear them babies; babies which belonged to them and will be called out by their names. This exploitation of female sexuality was another factor which added towards the repression of *Fariha* and later became reason of her Paranoia, her physiological disorders. This mechanical nature of relationship among husband and wife indicate the isolation of *Fariha* within her marriage. Her voice was never heard, and she finally gave up on all her desires but being a house wife, she could not.

Other than sexual exploitation she also went through the painful experience of "abortion", the unimaginable pain and suffering. Most importantly it was against her will, she wanted to keep her baby but the pressure from her husband could not let her wishes survive. This shows us how much *Fariha* lacks control over her own body, her lack of authority even in the matters most personal indicate towards the loss of identity and self within a marriage. Her husband, being her care taker speaks for his wife. He is the one doing all the talking as she keeps on thinking, while he keeps on justifying his position "she had to have this abortion I didn't realize how much she wanted it" (p.81). To prove himself as a rational being he insists on representing his wife as an extremely emotional, an illogical person whom you cannot reason with. She was not given her own voice; instead her husband kept on apologizing for her "foolishness". As if he was the victim of her irrational behavior, she being an unreasonable person was a Burdon for him.

6 Discussion

Through the detailed psychoanalysis of *Fariha's* character we can understand the various forms of abuse she suffered, both in her adolescence and adulthood. The psychological abuse from partner was tolerated by *Fariha* for a very long time, passively, even before her marriage she was psychologically abused by her parents. Being part of such a family where women were not expected to express their emotions and opinions she suffered from isolation throughout her life. Even though the childhood molestation and accounts of marital rape indicate the sexual abuse in *Fariha's* life, her sexual abuse however became one of the major reasons for psychological instability. The pain of sexual abuse was more related to emotions as compared to physical pain, her inability to express resentment towards sex was another reason for her repression and psychological oppression.



Psychoanalysis is the theory of Psychology which in this context is used to analyze text of the selected story. The term psychoanalysis refers to the analysis of human unconscious, however in case of literature-based research, the elements of psychoanalysis, discussed by Freud (1915) are identified within the text. Therefore, psychoanalysis of selected fiction is approached while staying within the text of story. Textual analysis is crucial part of psychoanalysis and character analysis as unconscious is approached through its depiction within text.

7 Conclusions

Through psychoanalytic analysis of the story we come to know that the basic cause of protagonist's paranoia was isolation from her immediate family as well as within marriage. She could not share her wishes, desires and express her fears and sorrows to her parents. Moreover, the sexual abuse she suffered from in her childhood and from her husband was the cause of her repression, and later became one of the major causes of her paranoia.

Other than sexual abuse, the childhood memories, recollections of her parents imply that the lack of confidence, inability to express herself and absence of control in her life was the result of her childhood training, she couldn't undo. Furthermore, the dream is the most suggestive part of story as through her dream *Fariha* could communicate her fears and repressions to the readers, the imagery of her nightmare was an act of displacement, each image and action was meaningful and suggestive beyond understanding.

Even though the story is about a recurrent dream, the "nightmare" in the title of the story is not only the dream but it is the title of *Fariha's* whole life, from childhood till old age where she suffers at each stage of her life at the hands of those closest to her.

Lastly, the fact that no one understood her, including her husband, parents and children till the end of story import that there is lack of understanding on issues of mental health and paranoia in Pakistani society. Consequently, instead of curing the patient, they pushed her even deeper into the depths of loneliness after being identified as psychologically unhealthy.

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