

A Feminist Perspective on Women as The Other in Hanif Kureishi's Collected Stories

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Abstract

This research analyzes Hanif Kureishi's Collected Stories (2010) through an existential feminist lens, drawing on Simone de Beauvoir's concept of women as the "Other" to examine the portrayal of women as the other. The research analyzes Kureishi's New Stories by using a qualitative analytical approach. The analysis is done by in-depth reading and collecting evidence of the depiction of women as the other in Kureishi's writings. The study explores how Kureishi's female characters are denied autonomy, excluded from the narrative center, and often depicted solely in relation to men thus establishing their identity as the other. The research aims to understand the imbalance of gender power in influential fictional literary writings by placing the experiences of fictional female characters within a theoretical framework. The research highlights that Kureishi's stories perpetuate the values of patriarchal structures, in which women are viewed as unimportant, passive, and secondary beings while men as subjects. And their portrayal as mere objects or suppressed characters mirrors the universal gendered imbalance, which is also emphasized by Beauvoir. The findings reveal that women are portrayed as the other, passive, and secondary, serving as narrative supports for male characters rather than possessing independent identities. These portrayals reflect patriarchal values and reinforce gender imbalance, aligning with de Beauvoir's view that men position themselves as subjects while rendering women insignificant. The study shows de Beauvoir's theory is important in understanding contemporary fictional literature that restricts the representation of women and reinforces their identity as the other. It also underscores the importance of more inclusive narrative strategies for understanding gender inequality and to highlight women's representation, identity, agency, and voice in literature, making it a significant contribution to feminist literary criticism.

Keywords: de Beauvoir, existential feminism, passive beings, gender inequality, secondary characters

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Introduction

In literary studies, feminist criticism always tries to reveal the subtle manners in which female characters are represented in the fiction. It mainly focuses on women as objects and the systems through which they are constructed as the other in a male-dominated society. Feminist literary criticism deeply analyzes the literary works to reveal that the texts depict gender roles. While it solely focuses on the reduction of women as objects and their passive portrayal, highlighting their submissive or subordinate role as compared to men.

This research utilizes Simone de Beauvoir's idea of "the other" from her renowned book *The Second Sex* (1953) to examine the representation of women as objects, passive beings and the other. She says, "She (woman) is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the "Other" (de Beauvoir, 1953).

According to her, a woman's position in society and culture is marginalized because she is always seen as "the second sex" and is simply defined in relation to men instead of her own identity. Her ideology challenges the patriarchal concept of viewing woman as inferior to the man who constructs her identity as both the other and as an object. By the end of the 18th century, these notions had become popular terms in critical research.

And not only de Beauvoir but also Iris Marion Young criticizes woman's object-like position in her essay *Throwing like a Girl* (1980). According to her, the male-dominated society shapes women's identity as passive and restricted beings. Their experiences are considered less significant than men's due to the society that views them as objects. She says, "A woman lives her body as an object...she does not move freely as a subject" (Young, 1980).

Young advances de Beauvoir's idea that society trains and constructs women as objects and the other and asserts that a woman's body is not an active agent, unlike a man. According to her, patriarchal society treats women as beings who are not self-centered but live their lives around men's experiences. Young contends this idea at a social level centers on men, where women are not cast as subjects, i.e., not as complete self-sufficient beings, but actually as objects, i.e., existing for others.

Furthermore, the idea of the "Other" by de Beauvoir helps us to analyze the literary works that show women in passive and subordinate roles and provides us the lens to analyze the secondary and object-like identity of women. Simone says, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" in her classic feminist work *The Second Sex* (1953). This statement highlights the patriarchal society's portrayal of women as submissive, passive beings and objects.

Similarly, women usually play supporting or secondary characters in Hanif Kureishi's short stories featuring men as main characters. Hanif is a Pakistani-born British author who is renowned for his thought-provoking novels addressing modern British society through the lenses of race, sexuality, and identity. Kureishi introduces a collection of short stories named *Collected Stories* (2010) that explore deep-rooted psychological and cultural issues arising due to individual and societal conflicts, and also including the sensitive issue of the identity of women as objects, which is evident in his short story "A Terrible Story."

Furthermore, his stories provide instances of women that are now seen as nothing more than objects and men are able to exert their control over them. Due to this, women are reduced to objects and powerless in a society where men have all the power. By analyzing the female characters' perspectives, this study seeks to determine whether Kureishi's depiction of women supports or contradicts de Beauvoir's idea of the "Other" and also if they are viewed as an object or not.

Various literary theories, such as post-colonialism, identity, and sexuality, are often used to critically examine Kureishi's work in the past. Themes of sexuality, multiculturalism, and identity are thoroughly investigated in the literature on Kureishi's works. For example, Kureishi's contradictory views on cultural hybridity and masculinity in postcolonial Britain are addressed by Bart Moore-Gilbert (2001). The impact of sexual freedom on gender and race is also examined by Susie Thomas (2005) in her analysis of Kureishi's stories. While there is some feminist discussion, the majority of the works focus on racism and the post-colonial themes.

Whereas, there has been limited research into feminist perspectives of Kureishi's writings, particularly when it comes to using de Beauvoir's idea of women as the "Other." There is an absence of in-depth analysis of the female characters in his short stories despite the fact that critics like Gina Wisker (2007) has worked on the gender dynamics in his writings. This study focuses on de Beauvoir's existentialist feminism

to provide a specific feminist critique to investigate the absence and treatment of women as objects in Kureishi's short stories.

This study is based on Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialism, which can be found in *The Second Sex* (1953). According to her, women have always been defined by their relationships with men, making them the "other" in a society that only values men. De Beauvoir's idea provides us a platform to look at how Kureishi writes about women and focuses on why they are left out and are deprived of their right to control their lives according to their wishes. According to de Beauvoir's concept of "woman as the other," women are viewed as objects rather than independent subjects in the men-centric world. This distinction establishes men as the norm and women as the outcast.

Additionally, the research employed an analytical technique that focused on qualitative data. It involved deep textual analysis of the stories, like examining narrative techniques, portrayal of characters, and character interactions that mirror the position of women as objects and their identity as passive and powerless beings. Taking de Beauvoir's thought as the basis for its research, the study applied a feminist critical approach to explore the representation of women. This framework is essential to understand the portrayal of women by Kureishi's male narrators in relation to their own psychological and emotional needs.

This research aims to investigate the depiction of women as the other in Kureishi's selected stories, which remains a research gap within contemporary literature. The study explores the ways in which Kureishi's depiction of women in his *New Stories* relates to de Beauvoir's ideology of woman as the 'Other,' drawing attention to the universal male-centric literary narratives and establishment of female characters' identity as submissive, mere objects and passive beings.

This study is essential, as it brings forward questions like what kind of representation and roles are given to women in modern literature, particularly in Kureishi's writings. Through this depiction of women as the objects, outcasts, and the other, one can learn that women's voices are silenced and ignored in literature, and this marginalization is keeping gender stereotypes more alive. The application of de Beauvoir's feminist theoretical framework to Kureishi's *New Stories* provides a platform to debate and critically analyze the feminist literary criticism.

Moreover, the feminist analysis of these stories provides us the knowledge that the literature reflects and influences societal norms about gender roles deeply. It shows that it is important for women to be portrayed more fairly and openly in writings as men because it can change the views of society about gender equality and women's representation. The result of this study is significant, as it analyzes the depiction of female characters as objects having no voice and living in a society where they are treated as an objective entity and an outcast rather than seen as women.

Certainly, this study can also help in the future for more research on better understanding of gender dominancy affecting writings, particularly works written by men, and making people more aware of the significance of fair and equal depiction of gender roles. It can also add to the broader discussion on women's equality in fictional narratives by examining the portrayal of women as secondary or the other in Kureishi's works and the impact of these portrayals that can positively change the society. Through the application of de Beauvoir's theoretical framework, the study reveals that the Kureishi's stories mirror and help societal norms to outcast women and create their identity as the other.

This study is restricted to a detailed analysis of New Stories from Kureishi's collection of short stories named Collected Stories (2010), which is a collection of his short fiction written from 1997 to 2010. It was published in March 2010 by Faber & Faber as a paperback edition. The researcher just focused on short stories from New Stories, which are 8 in number and consist of 59 pages. Although the analysis provides detailed insights, it might not cover all of Kureishi's depictions of women in his works and only focuses on aspects like women being viewed as objects and treated like the other in society by ignoring their voices and experiences.

Therefore, it mainly focuses on de Beauvoir's notion of woman as the other. And examines that the women are portrayed as objects in Kureishi's short stories by analyzing the roles of female characters and societal factors that compelled women to be silenced and represented through men's perspective rather than their own, for instance, in "A Terrible Story." The results of this study will contribute to literature that features stronger female characters.

To summarize, this research used Kureishi's compelling short stories from his book Collected Stories (2010) to investigate the depiction of women in fiction as objects instead of subjects. This research contributes to the continuous feminist effort to

reclaim equal fictional spaces for women in literature. By utilizing de Beauvoir's notion of woman as the 'Other,' the study aims to advocate broader critical approaches while improving our awareness of gender equality in modern literature.

Review of the Literature

This section seeks to present the critical overview of the existing literature, exploring the aspect like the status of women as the other which is central to this study. It critically analyzes the prevalent scholarly works that address the feminist frameworks, particularly de Beauvoir's concepts about women's representation. It is necessary to explore the relevant literature to understand the continued women's marginalization in literary narratives.

❖ Mid-Twentieth Century Feminism

In the mid-twentieth century, feminist scholars marked a turning point in feminist critical theories. Most of the scholars addressed the freedom and autonomy of women in both personal and societal experiences, which is the basis of second-wave feminism. Within this intellectual environment, Simone de Beauvoir introduced her groundbreaking ideology of women as the other constructed by a men-centric society.

De Beauvoir's concept belongs to the era of second-wave of feminism, which spans from the 1960s to the 1980s and focuses on the construction of women's identity, gender inequality, and autonomy. According to this ideology, women are identified by their association to men and are viewed as subordinates in comparison to men in patriarchal societies. Literary studies have used de Beauvoir's concept to discover narrative structures that represent women as objects. And reveal that there is a relation between the absence of feminine identity and broader cultural influences that are rooted in linguistic and narrative practices.

The portrayal of women as subordinate characters in literature mainly influenced by a patriarchal society has been thoroughly analyzed by feminist theories. De Beauvoir's notion of woman as the "Other" particularly serves as a crucial foundation to understand these portrayals. This concept is used by many researchers to analyze the literary writings where male characters act as the main characters while female characters contribute to support this standardized male identity.

The portrayal of women in literature is often bound to traditional frameworks affected by gendered narratives. In Kureishi's *Collected Stories* (2010), the portrayal of women is deeply shaped by a narrative perspective that emphasizes men's subjectivity. Even though racial or ethnic background and sexuality in Kureishi's works have been analyzed but, there is a lack of in-depth representation of gender. Feminist readings have identified this phenomenon as a form of othering in which women mirror men's struggles rather than contributing to the narrative's development as an individual. These studies place Kureishi's writings within a literary tradition that promotes gender injustice and making them crucial for feminist critique.

❖ **Woman as the Other, passive beings and secondary characters**

Woman as the other is a theory according to which society has portrayed women as the other in comparison to men. They are seen as secondary, subordinate, and are seen in the shadow of male identity rather than as independent and complete human beings. Their identity is suppressed and is defined with relation to men. A female's own identity is suppressed, and she becomes the other in a male-centered system. De Beauvoir explains it as "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." De Beauvoir's (1953) famous argument is that man is the subject and he is the absolute, while woman is the other. This claim established the representation of women as "the other" as a prominent theme in feminist literary criticism. This idea has influenced feminist theory and inspired several researchers to investigate the reinforcement of patriarchal systems reflecting marginalization, silence, and the position of women as objects in literature. As de Beauvoir sees it, men have traditionally held the position of the subject as solidarity, leadership, achievement, and absoluteness, while women have been reduced to the role of objects opposed to and far from the subject.

Additionally, Beauvoir gave the concept of existentialist feminism, and its main principle is that women's experiences are best understood as individual experiences rather than collective ones. Regardless of outside influences like patriarchal society and culture that attempt to place women in already established gender roles, each woman must prioritize herself and make her own decisions. Women, according to de Beauvoir, are compelled into a sense of non-normality, in contrast to men, who are the norm and whose superiority is natural, anticipated, and even desired. De Beauvoir emphasized that women are also a free-living human being like men.

In addition, Delphy (1977) relates de Beauvoir's existential and philosophical concept of women as the other to a sociological or materialist framework. She asserts that the status of women as the other is a product of patriarchy and not biology. And further extends de Beauvoir's ideology by emphasizing that the identity of women as the other is not only viewed on an existential level but is also placed in a system of domestic and economic exploitation.

Conversely, Irigaray (1985) introduces a more profound concept that the language systems create and support otherness. Irigaray acknowledges de Beauvoir's concept that women are marginalized and socially excluded, but she questions the language and symbolic systems that create this discrimination. Irigaray said that women are restricted by silence, absence, and lack of representation. She also criticizes the exclusion or minimization of female perspectives through the ways language, philosophy, and representations are organized around male supremacy.

Where de Beauvoir emphasizes existential and social aspects of otherness, Irigaray questions the language that is used to create the identity of other. Her work points out that the female lacks representation since she cannot be fully expressed within male-dominated language systems, therefore shifting the conversation from social roles to semiotics. She exposes that the identity of women as the other begins at the very core of meaning-making in language systems that support male supremacy, and this critique advances de Beauvoir's concepts.

However, Butler (1990) acknowledges de Beauvoir's fundamental observation of Otherness but contends that the term "woman" is a discursive construct that is the result of language and society that shapes the meaning of women through expectations about gender and their roles in society. According to her, performativity is the means by which the process of othering is sustained and women are identified as other to men in a binary that not only generates but also rejects her agency.

In contrast to de Beauvoir's concept that separates biology from social injustice, Moi (1999) has done very deep and credible work. She adds to the concept that the physical body is not an obstacle but rather it is a fundamental background for expressing gender identity. Moi agrees that gender and sex differences have made women more vulnerable and oppressed and asserts that a body is the inescapable

background for each of our acts. She explained that de Beauvoir called women "the other" because society has placed men at the center and women on the margins.

Not only this, but Toril's perspective gives de Beauvoir's concept even more significance by implying that the knowledge of subjectivity depends on physical experience and the body. And it also offers a convincing development of de Beauvoir's existential feminism, especially in realizing that gender-based otherness is supported by the physical body. This idea justifies de Beauvoir's concept by including women's bodies in the discussion of autonomy and oppression.

Furthermore, Gamble (2006) adds a profound concept by examining patriarchal dichotomies that reduce women to what men are not. She says men are described in a male-dominated society as active, logical, and powerful, whereas women are labeled as emotional, weak, and submissive. This binary opposition reflects de Beauvoir's claim that the female is positioned as other in contrast to the male. Within the framework of this study, Gamble's discussion not only supports de Beauvoir's concept but also positions it within modern feminist criticism.

She claims that women are not regarded as human beings in patriarchal civilizations simply because they are female by highlighting that in the view of gender roles, women take on the roles of men's opposites: fragile, naïve, and passive. According to de Beauvoir, this duality reinforces the idea that women are the other and sets up a social order where men are seen as fundamental and women as secondary.

Moreover, not only the concept of women as the "Other" has long been investigated by feminists and scholars, but it is also a recurring motif in literature, as seen in works like *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood and *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* by Daniyal Mueenuddin. Strict cultural norms and restrictions in Gilead force women to face gender-based subordination and othering. The text's literary study examines that through gender-based othering, the dystopian society subjugates and regulates women.

Hence, several feminist theorists from various periods and fields agree that women are constructed in this society as outcasts and the other, whether by language, performances or physical body and allows one to understand their marginalization, their status as objects, and their silence. This supports de Beauvoir's argument that

a woman's identity is constructed in opposition to man, and the systems that make her inactive and voiceless limit her ability to be free.

There is still a noticeable lack of feminist analyses that specifically address the representation of women in Hanif Kureishi's short fiction, despite the fact that his works have been extensively studied for their examination of identity, race, migration, and masculinity. The majority of existing studies focus on male protagonists and their struggles with dual identities due to migration. While these studies frequently ignore the way, female characters are positioned and constructed in connection to them.

This research examines the portrayal of women as the "Other" in these narratives. The research uses de Beauvoir's concept of the other to explore the male protagonists in Kureishi's short stories that reduce the female characters to secondary characters. This research highlights that Kureishi's female characters typically lack strong narratives and instead reflect the struggles of the male characters.

Moreover, the concept of women as the other by de Beauvoir has not been the subject of many scholarly analyses with regard to Kureishi's works. Only a few studies have explored that Kureishi's writings restrict women's subjectivity and autonomy. This ultimately supports and reinforces their status as objects, marginalization, and silencing. The current research fills this research gap by providing a feminist analysis of Kureishi's stories from de Beauvoir's perspective that highlights the ways in which women are depicted as "the other," viewed like objects, and denied voices.

Methodology

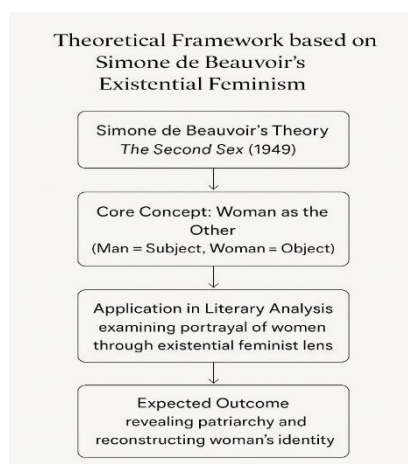
A research method is a technique used by researchers to answer their research objectives by collecting, interpreting, and analyzing the data. In simple words, these are the steps that one follows to conduct research and to collect data. The researcher used a descriptive qualitative method, an approach based on non-numerical data such as dialogues, behaviors, or representations of the characters to interpret literary texts.

The research used this approach to critically analyze the short stories by Kureishi in detail. It includes a deep examination of the literary texts, dialogues of the characters (particularly male protagonists), and the hidden meaning behind these dialogues that construct the identity of women as the other and as objects. Additionally, the researcher used this method to explain each character, their dialogues, their portrayal in the stories, and their feelings that shape the structure of the stories.

The research employed an analytical technique, mainly focused on qualitative data, to explore who is narrating the story, the portrayal of female characters, and their roles in the story. The research also delved into the examination of character shaping, narrative perspective, and motifs of the narratives to reveal that the gender identities are formed through fiction. And rather than implying authorial intent, this research methodology analyzed the stories effects and patterns of representation.

Introduction to the Theoretical Framework

This study used de Beauvoir's ideology of "women as the other" to analyze the representation of women as the other in Kureishi's *Collected Stories* (2010). She gave the concept that women are treated as the other in a patriarchal society and are defined in relation to men in her book *The Second Sex* (1953). She argued that women are always given less importance than men and are restricted by autonomy and subjectivity. Following diagram represents the main points of the theoretical framework through which study is analyzed.



So, the study explored the manners in which women are marginalized and deprived of voices in Kureishi's writings by using de Beauvoir's concept as its foundation. De Beauvoir (1953) claimed that man is the subject and absolute, while woman is the opposite of man, i.e., she is the object because of the male-dominated society that treats her as subordinate. And her claim mirrors the literary writings in which patriarchal structures portray women as the objects that are marginalized and deprived of subjectivity.

In addition, de Beauvoir's concept aligns with the objective of this research that explored the construction of women as other, by analyzing the female characters in his stories that are depicted through men's perspective thus creating their identity as non-subjects and passive entities in both fictional and real world. Also, it explored the idea that Kureishi's writings are male-centered and depict men as main characters and females as supporting characters whose sole purpose is to contribute to the development of male characters. In his stories, the woman's character is completely bound to the man's life, with no voice or identity of her own.

In addition, de Beauvoir stated that women are not independent beings because they are always identified with their relationship to men, and literary writings that support patriarchal systems reinforce this gender inequality. Most of the literary writings prioritize men's autonomy while ignoring women's subjectivity and portray them as secondary characters. In Kureishi's short stories like "A Terrible Story," the character of the wife is deprived of a voice and is only represented through the husband's conversation.

The researcher analyzed Kureishi's *Collected Stories* (2010) through the lens of de Beauvoir and found out that his stories are mostly centered on men, and women are left out and forced to live according to society's established gendered subjectivity. The application of de Beauvoir's feminist ideology of women as other provided a platform to debate and critically analyze the silencing of women in Kureishi's short stories and to secure the positive construction of women in future writings. Because his writings only represent the struggles of male characters, while the sacrifices of female characters are kept in the background or ignored completely.

Furthermore, the core principles driven out from de Beauvoir's theory are otherness, positioning women as objects, and marginalization of women, which can be seen in Kureishi's short stories. As in his writings, women are depicted as less important

than men, and their sole purpose is to support the main protagonist, who is surely a man. Women are part of his narratives, but they are not the center or focus of the plot, as they focus on men's journeys and experiences. This reflects de Beauvoir's aspect of otherness, which also claimed that women exist to support men only.

Meanwhile, this theoretical framework facilitated the understanding of the idea of otherness which leads to the creation of women's identity as objects while men's as subjects. It provided the necessary resources to critically examine these representations without making external judgments. It also provided an explanation of the literary text that promotes certain gendered readings itself. It is evident through the depiction of women in Kureishi's works that literature not only supports men's experiences as central but also thrives on the system giving more significance to men.

To conclude, the goal of this study is to analyze the objective of the study by employing de Beauvoir's idea of women as the other, accompanied by exploring the significant aspects like reduction of women's identity to passive beings, silencing their voices and their representation only through men's perspective. These aspects offered a theoretical framework to analyze the texts of Kureishi's *Collected Stories* (2010) and also facilitated the understanding of the construction of gender roles in patriarchal systems. This framework corresponded to the research problem by providing a platform to examine the representation of women in literature and their contribution to developing gender identities.

Analysis and Discussion

❖ Introduction

This section presents and explores the representation of female characters in Hanif Kureishi's *New Stories* from his book *Collected Stories* (2010), to investigate the objective of the study based on Simone de Beauvoir's feminist thought, specifically her idea of woman as the "Other." The main aim of this section is to examine the construction of notion of women as the other in *New Stories*. Although all the stories are different in their context, motifs, perspectives, and settings, they still all define women in their relation to men and portray them as secondary characters instead of autonomous human beings.

As mentioned in earlier section, this research is based on de Beauvoir's notion of women as the "Other" from her book *The Second Sex* (1953), which resonates with Kureishi's portrayal of women. This critical exploration reveals the behavior of patriarchal society towards women. The study analyzes factors like the voice of the narrator, characters and their conversations, and depiction of characters in the text to highlight that these factors reinforce women's portrayals as objects while men as subjects, passive bodies, and othering of women.

Therefore, this study employs critical interpretation of text, dialogues, and representation of characters. And it is supported by textual evidence and theoretical application to both address the research objective, i.e., the representation of women as other and to justify the significance of the equal representation of both genders in literary writings.

❖ **Women as the other, passive beings and secondary characters**

This section analyzes de Beauvoir's concept of women as the Other in Kureishi's writings, which also corresponds to the second objective of the research. The study examines how Kureishi has represented the female characters in his *New Stories* as other, rather than the main character. This concept is derived from the famous existential theory of de Beauvoir, according to which women have always been given the status of other than men, i.e., men are central while women are outcasts. The analysis presented in this section will examine how Kureishi's female characters have been represented as other, depriving them of identity, power, and social significance. Thus, it fully justifies the second objective of this research.

According to de Beauvoir, being "Other" refers to the idea that a woman is seen and defined through the roles assigned to her by men. These roles restrict her to immanence and deny her the right of transcendence. She claims that marriage is the main social part that puts women in the state of immanence (1953). In this context, marriage is more like transferring a product from the seller to the buyer or from the first owner to the second owner. After marriage, the main obligation of a woman is to follow her husband and eventually become the other. This traditional duty of women is present in Kureishi's selected stories, where husbands are the narrators and agents of wives, presenting their opinions and voices.

This is also evident in the story "The Dogs," which presents a female character as a protagonist whose purpose is just to save the child, even by sacrificing herself. Her selfhood is reduced to maternal instinct and physical endurance and presents her as the idealized concept of the "Other." Although she is the main character, the author still writes the story from a third-person perspective, unlike his other stories, and it reinforces the standard of making women the other. "It was too perilous for her to pick him up, and at five years old he was too heavy to be carried far" (Kureishi, 2010, p. 495). The story reveals nothing about her voice and emotions.

This lack of representation is also seen in "Long Ago Yesterday," where the mother is depicted as an old lady sitting in her big chair, knitting wool and watching plays, but she is deliberately shown as emotionally absent. The narrator, who is the son, only represents her perspective when she says, "Shut up, I'm watching this." In both stories, women are not given an important role in the story, and their status is reduced to biological and domestic roles. This reflects de Beauvoir's view that "Woman is defined and differentiated in relation to man... she is unnecessary" (1953).

Likely, in the short story "The Assault," the narrator is a woman who becomes a helpless listener to another woman's continuous emotional conversation. She can neither intervene nor escape this emotional monologue. "I begin to see that the woman has no interest in my response, that there is nothing she wants from me. I only have to be here, a person, that's all" (Kureishi, 2010, p. 511). This statement reveals that the speaker is emotionally worn out and needs just a listener. This reveals that the society has burdened a woman so much that unsaid words have throttled her.

Moreover, the narrator is always trapped in similar situations, as she says, "Yes with mother, in the kitchen, or on the phone, and sometimes with friends, but does it follow that I want this all the time?" (Kureishi, 2010, p. 512). This exposes that she is not a subject but the other who lacks authority, and her existence is defined by the decisions of others. This reflects de Beauvoir's opinion that women are often reduced to a state of "immanence," where they are unable to assert themselves as autonomous and expressive.

The representation of women in terms of otherness is further reinforced in the short story "Phillip," where the character of Fiona is only the part of the narrator's memory

and not an agent of herself. She is given no voice and is represented only to reveal the narrator's changing emotional states due to her absence or presence. As the narrator confesses, "She had moved out of our flat by the time the film started... I was both bereft and elated, with time on my hands." (Kureishi, 2010, p. 532). This statement highlights that Kureishi's female characters are more objects than autonomous persons.

Furthermore, in the story "Maggie," the character of Maggie is not presented as a complete person having her own identity but as a vague glimpse of Max's past. Her presence is entirely determined by Max's gaze. Maggie quietly listens to Max's conversations about his house, his poetry, and his summer plans. And she says, "I've thought I should change my life," but the author, the narrator, and the story do not give her the opportunity to express her thoughts. Similarly, the story "The Decline of the West" presents the character of the wife only as a reason for the narrator's frustration. In both stories, the woman is deprived of her identity and her agency and is used only to express the man's sense of change or boredom. As de Beauvoir says, "He (the man) is the subject; he is the absolute — and she is the other," and these stories represent this concept accurately.

In all of these stories, women are either silenced, pushed into the background, or denied their individuality altogether, creating their identity as the other in society. Their presence is shaped according to men's perspective. This approach directly addresses the second research objective: to examine the ways in which women are presented as "other" in *New Stories* by Kureishi. In the light of de Beauvoir's conceptual framework, it is clear that the female characters in these stories are not presented as independent subjects but as secondary entities, and they are silenced, absent, or symbolically rendered invisible in a male-centered world.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This section provides a conclusion and suggestions for further readings after drawing the analysis result from the previous section. The researcher offers a conclusion after finding and analyzing the depiction of female characters as the other and as objects in Hanif Kureishi's "New Stories."

This research is conducted under the title of “A Feminist Perspective on Women as the Other in Hanif Kureishi’s Collected Stories,” with the aim to explore the representation of the female characters in the light of de Beauvoir’s concept of women as the “Other.” The result of this research is based on the objective that not only explains the status of women in Kureishi’s short stories but also raise important questions within both literary and social contexts.

The researcher finds that Kureishi’s writings portray female characters as other, which resonates with de Beauvoir’s concept of woman as the other. The analysis of selected stories reveals that women’s identity is constructed as the other or shaped by their relation to men. In his stories, mostly female characters are dependent of men for their identity. Their experiences and perspectives are given less importance as compared to men, making them subordinate and submissive. The study also reinforces de Beauvoir’s ideology of positioning women as the other. By highlighting that Kureishi’s female characters are mostly supporting characters and they are judged in the society through the men’s perspective instead of seen as complete and independent beings.

The researcher also finds out that women are portrayed as objects while men as subjects in Kureishi’s stories, which not only aligns with the objective but with de Beauvoir’s concept also. Because she stated in her book that this men-centric treats women as the other and as object while men as subject. It is evident in his selected stories, where they are shown as subject to men’s experiences, instead of giving them human status completely. In these stories, women are not represented as individuals or complete personalities, having their independent voice, but as passive beings, deprived of voice and agency, and their sole purpose is to complete the man’s journey. His writings mirror the idea that man is the subject and absolute, while woman is the object and the other.

Lastly, the researcher finds that the silence or absence of women’s voices is the major cause of othering of women in male-dominated society. In Kureishi’s stories, women’s dialogues are not only limited but also mostly knowingly omitted. Their emotions, thoughts, and perspectives are also often absent, and men are agents of their women’s voices both in real and fictional worlds. His stories depict women as silent spectators, denying their existence and marginalizing them to the corners of society at both social and psychological levels so that they remain the other in the society. This absence or exclusion of silence, whether intentional or unintentional,

perpetuates the male-centric narratives and weakens the role of women as main protagonists.

Hence, these findings leave no doubt that the representation of women in Kureishi's *New Stories*, as the other is mainly due to their depiction as objects and the silencing of their voices in patriarchal dominance. Although Kureishi's short stories sometimes may favor women but, the overall portrayal of women in his stories is marked by traditional male dominance

The researcher presents the suggestions for other researchers and further studies after concluding the discussion. These are the following:

The researcher recommends that future studies can apply more than two theories or include other theorists' perspectives on the same topic so that more aspects of women's othering could be revealed. Also, the reader can add more stories of Kureishi or can compare it with both Eastern and Western writers to see how the identity of women is created in different cultures.

The researchers can use this study for psychological exploration of Kureishi's male characters, which can help to identify why and how this ideology of women as the other develops within men and society. Future cross-cultural studies can use this study to find out how women's voices and experiences can be depicted in literary works as positive and central by representing them as subjects, main characters or presenting their voices and not merely as outcasts, the other and objects.

The researcher hopes this research brings attention to a new angle of feminist criticism where the works of a Pakistani-born British writer are examined in the framework of an existential feminist theorist like de Beauvoir. This study not only deepens the discussion on feminist criticism but also provides an opportunity to connect theoretical frameworks about the identity of women with contemporary literature. Also, this study emphasizes the fact that literature is an imaginative world reflecting socially dominant structures and power hierarchies.

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