

# A Feminist Stylistic Analysis of “Broken Verses” by Kamila Shamsie

Amna Noor Hussain<sup>1</sup> & Tahira Jabeen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of English, The University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Muzaffarabad

Correspondence: Tahira Jabeen, Department of English, The University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir, Pakistan. E-mail: wee4t@yahoo.com

Received: August 23, 2019 Accepted: September 15, 2019 Online Published: October 28, 2019

doi:10.5539/ijel.v9n6p214 URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v9n6p214>

## Abstract

This research employed the feminist stylistic framework of Sara Mills in determining the difference between Kamila Shamsie’s women and men characters in her novel “Broken Verses”. The selected novel was analyzed using the model provided by Sara Mills, which aims to investigate texts at the level of word, phrase/sentence. The research identified dominant and recurring features in the novel. Women characters differ from the men in that there are more descriptions given to them which pertain to their thoughts, emotions, experiences, vulnerability towards men, and their physical characteristics. Men are described according to their physical strength, personalities, attitudes, which dominate women. Overall, the research shows that at these levels of analysis, the novel consistently foregrounds the female consciousness and experience. At the same time, the novel also magnifies the pervading dominance of men over women in many circumstances.

**Keywords:** feminist analysis, word level, phrase/sentence level, male and female characters

## 1. Introduction

Kamila Shamsie, a Pakistani female writer, who has rooted in a patriarchal culture in which women are silenced and marginalized to the domestic sphere and also having a liberal and modern exposure through a foreign education, represents women in her fiction (Sofia Hussain, 2011). Kamila Shamsie’s novel “Burnt shadows” no doubt is the feminist study where the novelist has presented the very feminine psyche of women characters in her novel. “Burnt shadows” can easily be called a Feminist novel. The present study focuses on feminist analysis of the novel “Broken Verses” and the importance of this study also lies in its attempt to provide a useful addition to the language research made on the works of Kamila Shamsie.

### 1.1 Research Questions

The primary question which this study aims to answer is: How do the women characters in “Broken Verses” by Kamila Shamsie differ from the men?

The accompanying result inquiries are likewise answered:

- i. How are the characters in the novel portrayed through lexical choices?
- ii. How are the characters introduced in phrases and sentences?

### 1.2 Scope and Limitation

This study employs Sara Mills’ feminist stylistic analysis in investigating the novel “Broken Verses” by Kamila Shamsie. The data are narrowed down to only one novel, and from the framework adopted for the analysis only two levels out of three levels are used to analyse the dominant and recurring features in the novel.

### 1.3 Review of Related Literature

One of the studies, A Feminist Stylistic Analysis of Selected Short Stories By Kerima Polotan-Tuvera has been done by Mary Madeleine P. Denopra. This research employed the feminist stylistic framework of Sara Mills in determining the dissimilarity between Kerima Polotan-Tuvera’s women and men characters in her four Palanca Award-winning first-prize short stories, namely, “The Virgin” (1952), “The Trap” (1956), “The Tourists” (1959), and “The Sounds of Sunday” (1960). The intensive reading of the texts certainly led to the identification of the author’s distinct writing grace/practice as a fictionist. The research has shown that at all levels of analysis, the stories constantly foreground the female consciousness and experience.

Another work in this regard is A Queen’s Reputation: A Feminist Analysis of The Cultural Appropriations of

Cleopatra by Chamara Moore (2015). The purpose of this study was to examine how literature and media has contributed to this sexualized status of a queen who generated authority over such a flourishing nation. Additionally, "Representations of Malay Women in Dina Zaman's Selected Short Stories: A Feminist Stylistic Analysis" is done by Nazima Versay Kudus (2008). This study attempted to find out how Dina Zaman used language to represent Malay women characters in the selected short stories. In addition, Kudus aimed to evaluate whether the author has challenged or reinforced stereotypical depictions of her characters.

Moreover, another study, "Gender Specific Features of Male/Female Interaction in A Popular Romantic Novel by Barbara Cartland" has been done by Raija Savinainen. In this thesis, Raija concentrated on the gender implications of the structure of romantic novels, called "romantic formula" which referred to typical gender roles of the hero and heroine in romantic fiction. Raija claims that this is a fact that the hero's style to interact is derived from his traditional gender role whereas the heroine has more to do with individual and contextual affecting her gender role, although she also interacts in a manner deriving from typical gender hopes.

Beside this, another work is "Innocent Until Proven Filthy": A Corpus-Based Critical Stylistic Analysis Of Representations Of Men In Women's Magazines" done by Laura Coffey. In terms of naming and describing, she found that men are normally named using nouns relating to societal role, predominantly occupational roles.

In addition, "A Stylistic Study on Katherine Mansfield's "Miss Brill": A Feminist Stylistic Approach" has been done by Shenli Song. There have been some theses concerning Mansfield's "Miss Brill", most of which focus on the feminist ideas presented or some general linguistic features about the work but this feminist stylistic approach provided a new angle to objectively look into Katherine Mansfield's "Miss Brill" and have found that how the linguistic features are related to the feminist idea.

#### 1.4 Studies on Kamila Shamsie

Mashal Shahid (2017) has conducted research on the topic "Reversing the stereotypes of the Orient, and analyzing Nationalism and Transnationalism in *Burnt Shadows*". She concluded that in an attempt to advocate transnationalism, Shamsie is seen classifying herself with Hiroko (character) at numerous occasions. Shahid says that the satire is that, in spite of being a diaspora writer, she even fails to defend transnationalism as in the end of the novel, Raza who "sought out as many nationalities as possible" is arrested despite being innocent.

There is another research on the work of Kamila Shamsie and this is "The Hideous Beauty of Bird-Shaped Burns: Transnational Allegory and Feminist Rhetoric in Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*" by Gohar Karim Khan (2011). He asserts that Shamsie considers the role of language in forming and sustaining identities, with a specific prominence on the ability of the English language to assist as an adequate means of enunciating thoughts and feelings outside the English-speaking world. There are indications in the novel that psychological and emotional expressions do not essentially tally when spoken in different languages.

Beside this, another research that has been conducted on the work of Kamila Shamsie is "Politics of Identity in Kamila Shamsie's Novels" by Surya Kiran. She concluded that the limited canvas chosen by Kamila Shamsie so as to avoid references to delicate issues had kept discussions on identity politics at the surface level. Though she had not taken any revolutionary stand concerning the topics, she has taken enough care to make references to certain major events that had happened as a part of the Muslim nationalism as well as the ethnic movements.

## 2. Method

This specific research employs the framework of Sara Mills in conducting a thorough feminist stylistic analysis of the novel "Broken Verses" by Kamila Shamsie.

Sara Mills categorizes what she mentions as a "toolkit" (1995) by dividing her questions according to different levels of analysis. Apart from posing questions about realistic information of the text being analyzed, she presents questions for analysis at the levels of the word, phrase/sentence. This enables the researcher to make a thorough examination of features, particularly the dominant and repetitive ones in the novel.

### 2.1 Analysis at Word Level

This level of examination focuses on gender bias that can be seen in the use of individual words or lexical items. Mills (1995) refers to sexism in language as the foundation for examining word choice. Word choice can be examined by finding occurrences of sex-specific pronouns, ill use of generics, address terms, and negative descriptions of women (Mills, 1995).

#### 2.1.1 Generic Pronouns

Mills first describes generic forms as "those elements in language which continue a view of the male as a norm or universal and the female as divergent or individual" (Mills, 1995, p. 87). For example, the generic pronoun

“he” is frequently used to refer to men and women, while, in fact, Robertson’s research displays that people tend to envision a male when the generic “he” is used (Mills, 1995). Mills (1995) argues that occupations such as professors, scientists, and engineers are usually related with men. For example, this specific instance proves how the pronoun “he” is used generically: “If a ‘biology professor’ needs a lab assistant, ‘he’ should contact the secretary” (Mills, 1995, p. 88).

### 2.1.2 Generic Nouns

Another form of sexism in language at the level of words is the use of generic nouns. For instance, “when discussing humankind as a whole, the terms ‘mankind’ and ‘man’ are frequently used” (Mills, 1995, p. 89). In fact, meanings which are supposedly genderless are allocated the word “man” because of gender stereotypes and because the male is reflected as the norm. Based on prior studies, Mills presents the following instances to show these numerous uses:

‘to be man enough’

‘to be the right man for the job’

‘men in white coats’ (referring to scientists)

‘man in the street’ (referring to ordinary people)

‘man-power’

‘man-hours’

‘craftsman’, ‘policeman’, ‘fireman’, ‘postman’, ‘dustman’, ‘fisherman’ etc. (Mills, 1995, p. 91)

### 2.1.3 Women as the Marked Form

Ever since man is stereotypically reflected to be the norm and the universal, women are often represented as the deviation from that norm. Mills describes that “the linguistic forms present the men as an unmarked and the female as a marked form” (1995, p. 87). For example, the subsequent affixes which are used to refer to women are not without “insulting or trivializing connotations” (Mills, 1995, p. 195):

‘-lady’

‘-ess’

‘-ette’ (smaller, tiny)

‘-enne’

‘-trix’

It is as if there is a clear need to mark the female gender and if not then the terms will be automatically supposed to refer to the male. Instances of words which use the aforementioned affixes are: “actress”, “authoress”, “bachelorette”, “hostess”, “stewardess”, “poetess”, “lioness”, “comedienne”, and “aviatrix”. Mills (1995) proposes that even the word “aviatrix” connotes a lack of significance and is degrading to women.

### 2.1.4 Naming and Androcentrism

Mills repeats Cameron’s feminist view which concludes that, in general, languages are sexist mainly because “they represent or ‘name’ the world from a masculine perspective and in agreement with stereotypical beliefs about the sexes” (as cited in Mills, 1995, p. 103). The terms “vagina”, “vulva”, “cunt”, and “clitoris” are reflected offensive towards women particularly when used in public. Also, earlier studies have shown that some terms relating to sexual activity are created clearly from a male viewpoint and appear to show that “sex is active for males and passive for females” (Mills, 1995, p. 106).

These terms contain: “screw”, “leg over”, “penetrate”, “to get someone pregnant”, “to get someone in the family on the way”, “to put someone in the pudding club”, and “to put a bun in the oven”. Also, women are given titles differently from men and this shows that they are, certainly, a marked gender. Women are given the titles “Miss” and “Mrs.”, which means they are called according to whether they are bachelor or married. On the other hand, for men, the same label, which is “Mr.”, is given to them whether they are married or bachelor (Mills, 1995).

### 2.1.5 Metaphors for Women: Endearments and Diminutives

Earlier studies show that there are more terms used by men to refer to women which make use of metaphors than those used by women to refer to men. Mills brings up that metaphors are frequently used when creating terms of endearment for women as well as diminutives (1995). For example, men use the words “fowl” and “baby bird” or “chick” as terms of endearment for their female objects of friendliness. In specific, the word “chick” is also a

form of a diminutive which connotes that women can be compared to small animals.

## 2.2 Analysis at Phrase/Sentence Level

It is a mutual existing linguistic belief that words should be analyzed “in relation to their context” (Mills, 1995, p. 128) since their meanings are not contained only within the words themselves. This description recommends that texts should also be analyzed at the level of phrases or sentences. Mills presents definite criteria for analyzing texts at the level of phrases based on prior studies. The analyst should be on guard for ready-made phrases, presupposition and inference, metaphor and jokes or humor choices when analyzing phrases to possibly unravel features that are considerably gender-biased (Mills, 1995).

### 2.2.1 Ready-Made Phrases

First, Mills (1995) indicates that “there are phrases which are pre built and which convey sexist meanings” (p. 129). Earlier studies have tried to analyze texts that have proverbs, set phrases, and rhyming slang and have found out that there are, certainly, underlying messages in these forms which discriminate against women (Mills, 1995). The subsequent are instances of phrases cited by Mills based on preceding studies by other scholars:

- a. “A woman’s work is never done”
- b. “The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach”
- c. “mutton dressed as lamb”
- d. “trouble and strife”
- e. “A woman’s place is within the home.” (Mills, 1995, pp. 129–130)

The above instances indicate the several ways in which a woman can be discriminated against in a specific text.

### 2.2.2 Presupposition and Inference

Pragmatic philosophers such as Brown and Yule mainly emphasize that background knowledge is very essential in interpreting phrases or sentences (Mills, 1995). Background knowledge, in this case, essentially contains gender assumptions, stereotypes, and beliefs that are present in society. When one says, “A woman’s place is within the home”, there is a supposition that a woman is not proficient of successfully doing and finishing things that are not related to housework. The inference to this would be that the woman is destined or intended to be a housewife or someone who is stuck in the house and that is the only role she can play in her life. It is as if the statement is saying that the woman belongs to the house and nowhere else.

### 2.2.3 Metaphor

Mills also presents metaphor as a site for embedding gender stereotypes dominant in society. She cites Max Black’s explanation of the metaphor as “an instrument for drawing implications grounded in perceived similarities of structure between two subjects belonging to different areas” (Mills, 1995, p. 136). Mills elucidates that earlier studies on metaphors show that “Male sexuality is often defined in terms of metaphors of animal behavior, so that is seen to be at the similar level of instinctual behavior as an animal’s, and as little under control” (1995, p. 137). This kind of animalistic behavior in men is often presumed in society to be something that cannot be helped, though harmful it may be to women. Likewise, further studies show that sexuality is more usually “defined at a metaphorical level in terms of heat and lack of heat” (Mills, 1995, p. 137), as in the statement “That girl is hot.” Hotness here connotes bodily or sexual attraction.

## 3. Data Presentation and Analysis

### 3.1 Analysis of Characters at Word Level

Several lexical items are used which show gender differences. For one, men are described in terms of facts about them such as their physical appearance, their profession, their civil and social status, their family background, their sufferings in adverse circumstances, their intelligence and their personality.

#### 3.1.1 Male Characters

##### 3.1.1.1 Mir Adnan Akbar

Mir Adnan Akbar is described in the following excerpts:

CH.I. Pg.8. L1: In sober tie and an obviously expensive shirt

CH.I.Pg.14.L2: Your looks are actually quietly stunning.

CH.IV.Pg.44.L3: It was hard to think Ed as boyish.

CH.IV.Pg.47.L4: Screwball comic hero, devoted son, angry young man, condescending jerk.

CH.IV.L5: He was officially a producer, but seemed to take on all the responsibilities.

CH.VI.Pg.43.L6: It would be a comfort now to hear his soft voice.

CH.XVI.Pg.234.L7: and when he spoke his voice was very soft.

The narrator's first description of Ed, the hero of the novel, shows that his attire as well as personality is appreciated as shown in Line 1 & 2 (sober tie, expensive shirt) and (quietly stunning). He is considered glossy and shiny. He is represented as an intelligent man as mentioned in L3 that 'it was hard to think Ed as boyish'. A perfect mixture of perfection is represented for Ed's character as in L4 that he is crazy hero, dedicated son and superior jerk with some traits of angry man. From this it can be analyzed that attitude and arrogance suit on Ed's personality. It is not something that is against his character even it is projected that is a positive aspect of his persona. His occupation is also revealed in L5 (officially a producer). He is officially a producer but he is capable of taking all other responsibilities as shown in L5 (but seemed to take on all the responsibilities) that means he is a skilled and proficient person. Softness of his voice is also mentioned in line 6 and 7. Usually men don't have soft voice but here Ed is considered as the most polite and responsible person. Throughout the novel the persona of Ed is shown continuously as an optimistic, congenial and intelligent.

### 3.1.1.2 Father of Aasmaani

Father of Aasmaani is described in the following quotes:

CH.II.Pg.19.L1: With his trim physique and thick grey hair, he looked better than he had since the days of his boyhood.

CH.II.Pg.19.L2: There was a promise of extraordinary beauty in each angle of his face.

CH.II.Pg.19.L3: Consistency, thy name is Dad.

CH.XVIII.Pg.250.L4: Fathers were efficient in matters of finance, and rewiring.

Aasmani's father is described in terms of physical appearance in line 1 and 2 (trim physique, thick grey hair, extraordinary beauty). It can be seen that in old age her father is represented with the most extraordinary beauty and he even looked better than his boyhood, this means he is getting more and more charismatic with his age. There is an assumption that a usual old man is supposed to look heavy or too slimy and does not look extraordinary beautiful but this man has fine-look. Aasmani's father is characterized as a consistent man as seen in L3 (consistency, thy name is Dad). He showed stability in all matters. He has ability and he is right in this regard. Fathers are compared here in line 4 that they are efficient in finance and renovating. So, the character of Aasmani father is depicted likewise that he is efficient especially when compared to his wife Samina. Throughout the novel Aasmani's mother is described as the most selfish woman and here is in L5 how the Aasmani has shown her views for fathers.

### 3.1.1.3 Omi (Poet)

Omi, the poet is represented in the following quotations:

CH.V.Pg.50.L1: Even though his age (forty-two)... and previous theatrical experience (none).

CH.IX.Pg.128.L2: God, he spat on the powerful with impunity. He was fearless, utterly

CH.XII.Pg.168.L3: He had the face of a man who was indestructible.

CH.XXIV.Pg.326.L4: What struck me most was, simply, the greatness of his heart.

CH.XXIV.Pg.326.L5: Here was a man who faced exile, imprisonment, betrayal, and deprivation without losing his sense of wonder.

Here is the representation of character of the Poet Omi who was the beloved of Samina (mother of Aasmani). In line 1 his age has been mentioned (forty-two). He is described as a man who is not the creature of circumstances but the circumstances are the creature of him. He is represented as a powerful man as it can be seen in L2 where he is mentioned as fearless. He squabbled on the powerful with freedom as he was imprisoned many years yet he remained fearless. In L3 he is described as indestructible. He was the real man who smiled in trouble, gathered strength from distress and grew brave by reflection. His most striking feature is mentioned in L4 that is the greatness of his heart. In L5 there is depiction of his sufferings (exile, imprisonment, betrayal, deprivation) but in spite of that he didn't lose his intellect. In a nutshell his character is described as a figure of intelligence, courageous and indestructible.

### 3.1.1.4 Mirza

Mirza is described in the following excerpts:

CH.XII.Pg.161.L1: He was Mirza- the most beautiful, arrogant man I had ever known.

CH.XII.Pg.161.L2: An angel undomesticated and with no need for earthly morality.

CH.XIV.Pg.205.L3: Mirza had a startling beauty that was all about emaciation.

CH.XV.Pg.209.L4: He was smiling pleasantly...

CH.XV.Pg.209.L5: His sporty car and expensive kurta-shalwar...

CH.XV.Pg.214.L6: Mirza's voice wasn't arresting, but it was beautiful. Words leaped clear from his throat

Mirza, friend of Samina and Omi, is described as the most beautiful and arrogant man and this is mentioned in L1. Arrogance is not described in a negative sense but that suits on his character with positive aspect as in line 2 he is mentioned as a natural angel (angel undomesticated). He possessed amazing beauty which is stated in L3 (startling beauty). His smile (L4) is pleasant because a peaceful and calm man is always smiling. His attire and richness are commended in L5 (sporty car, expensive kurta-shalwar). As stated in L6 that his voice though not attractive yet beautiful and his speech/words are clear and his voice infuse his words with deeper meaning.

### 3.1.2 Female Characters

#### 3.1.2.1 Aasmaani Inqalab

Aasmaani Inqalab is described in the following quotes:

CH.I.Pg.2.L1: I stepped, naked, out of bed and belted on my dressing gown.

CH.I.Pg.8.L2: So, all she could see were my eyes-grey with a starburst of green in the centre—and my high forehead and straight, black hair.

CH.II.Pg. L3: I angled my head just so as to draw out the cords of my neck, clenched my jaw, narrowed my eyes to obscure the grey and make the green flash through.

CH.II.Pg.19.L4: Barnacles on my skin, seaweed draped around my neck.

CH.III.Pg.33.L5: I ran my fingers over the plastic sheet.

CH.VI.Pg.74.L6: Me with my palm pressing down on my foot...

CH.VII.Pg.80.L7: I was just the body of Aasmani, with nothing within it.

Aasmani is the heroine of the novel. In all the above-mentioned lines, she is represented by describing her dress and her different body parts. In L1, she is portrayed first naked then putting a gown on her. Her striking feature is stated in L2 having grey eyes with green eye ball and high forehead along with straight black hair. It is an assumption that people with grey eyes tend to be very gentle yet full of energy as the character of Aasmaani is. Here is beautiful portrayal of her eyes to attract the readers because the beauty of a woman can be seen in her eyes as it is the case with Aasmaani. Behind the most beautiful eyes, lay secrets deeper and darker than the mysterious sea and same is the case with Aasmaani because she was suffering with pain because her mother left her. Aasmaani is represented by mentioning most of her body parts that can be seen from line L3-L6 (my head, my neck, my jaw, my eyes, my skin, my palm, my foot). In L7, Aasmaani is labeled by just a body with nothing within it that is showing that she is not capable of doing something worthy, something satisfactory because she is nothing but a body without a soul. She is portrayed here as 'nothing'.

#### 3.1.2.2 Samina Akram

Samina Akram is described in the following lines.

CH.V.Pg.59. L1: Samina Akram of blazing eyes and fire rhetoric ...

CH.VII. Pg.87.L2: She was ablaze with beauty.

CH.VII.Pg.86.L3: And she-she just had stepped into incandescence.

CH.VII.Pg.87.L4: She was wearing a plain white kurta, a thick karra on her wrist-silver inlaid with lapis lazuli-and had her tied back with a scarf... flashing grey green eyes.

CH.IX.Pg.120.L5: She was beautiful, then more beautiful.

Samina Akram, a well-known Pakistani activist was the mother of Aasmaani and fourteen years ago, she disappeared. There is no doubt that there is great value assigned to external beauty and Samina is beautifully

portrayed by her intense beauty that delights the eyes of the readers. In L1, her intense eyes and fire grandiloquence is giving a charm effect to her persona. In L2, her exquisiteness raged with a fire (ablaze with beauty). In L3, her walk is depicted as brilliance (had stepped into incandescence). In L4, her dressing is shown with each and every feature (white kurta, on her wrist silver inlaid, tied back with a scarf). In L5, the intensity of her beauty is more described. She is like the woman having two things in her, classy and fabulous.

### 3.1.2.3 Shehnaz Saeed

Shehnaz Saeed is described in the following extracts:

CH.V.Pg.53.L1: With her black chapals and black shalwar-kameez she seemed to appear and disappear...

CH.V.Pg.54.L2: She was dressed in a sari with a sleeveless blouse, a red rose stuck behind her ear. The theatrics of it!

CH.V.Pg.53.L3: As she stepped from light tile to dark, her existence a strobe-light illusion.

CH.V.Pg.57.L4: She danced around her living room in outrageous gold heels

CH.XI. Pg.156.L5: I don't know how to tell you what a monster your mother is.

CH.XI.Pg.156.L6: I would tell her she didn't have the intelligence to sound like the poet.

CH.XI.Pg.156.L7: I would tell her she was wrinkled and that everyone knew her husband couldn't bear to touch her any more. I would say 'casting couch' and 'neglectful mother' and 'has-been' and 'mediocre talent'.

CH.XVII.Pg.237.L8: In her chiffon sari, with a diamond bracelet around her wrist, Shehnaz Saeed looked so utterly... the rectangle of illumination

Shehnaz Saeed was the popular actress of her time in the novel. Her character is portrayed like a charming personality. Her dressing is depicted in L1 and 2 (black chapals, black shalwar-kameez, sari with sleeveless blouse). This shows that she was a mess of gorgeous chaos, the luster of this stunning woman is brighter than the stars of heaven and it can be seen by her dressing. In L3, her impression is stated as "her existence a strobe-light illusion". Strobe light is compared with her existence and it is used to produce regular flashes of light like the charm of Shehnaz Saeed is giving the impression of sparks to the readers. In L4, she is presented as doing a shameful act (outrageous gold heels). She is dancing not in front of anyone but around her living room still her act is presented as offensive. In L5, she is called a monster. As a mother she deserves dignity and honor but here she is projected as a monster. In L6, there seems a battle of gender as Shehnaz Saeed is portrayed as she didn't have intelligence like the Poet has. She is not capable of competing a man. In L7, her moral values are dishonored by mentioning her first having wrinkled face and then by "casting couch", "neglectful mother" and "mediocre talent". She is referred as a "casting couch" and this reference is used to the supposed rehearsal whereby actresses are awarded parts in movies or dramas in return for granting sexual favors to the casting director. Then she is presented as a careless mother who doesn't have ability to take good care for her child. She is also stated as an actress having ordinary talent. In a nutshell, neither she has an ability to take care her child nor has any extraordinary aptitude. Her charm of beauty is again stated in L8 (chiffon sari, diamond bracelet on her wrist) where the readers may find her absolutely astoundingly gorgeous and it is the first and last interesting thing about her because in another case her honor is disgraced. Her beauty is termed in various ways either by her dressing or by her physique portions.

To conclude the discussion, it can be asserted that it is very apparent that the bodily descriptions given to women are more complex and rather sensationalized than those given to men. This shows that women characterized in this manner are described according to their sensuality and charm. This reflection on the fragmentation of women and men reveals that there are more descriptions of the bodies of women than those of men. Physical description of women includes their bodies as a whole, and, more abundantly, in fragmented parts.

In this regard, in the novel men are characterized in terms of truths about them such as their physical appearance, their profession, their civil and social status, their family background, their sufferings in confrontational situations, their intelligence and their personality whereas the women's description is much more detailed in terms of physical appearance than that of the males regarding their built, body parts, how they dress, as well as their likes and dislikes, the way they speak and more specifically their humiliation and fascination.

### 3.2 Analysis of Characters at Phrase/Sentence Level

It is a common contemporary linguistic conviction that words ought to be dissected in connection to their specific situation (Mills, 1995, p. 128) since their meanings are not contained just inside the words themselves. This clarification proposes that writings ought to likewise be investigated at the level of phrases or sentences.

The analysis will be on guard for ready-made phrases, metaphor, recurring features and transitivity choices when examining phrases/sentences to possibly unravel features that will be significantly gender-biased.

### 3.2.1 Male Characters

#### 3.2.1.1 MIR ADNAN AKBAR

CH.IV.Pg.44.L1: Those men with their smiles and charms would make you forget.

CH.IV.Pg.46.L2: When my mother warned you, you weren't listening.

CH.IV.Pg.47.L3: Screwball comic hero, devoted son, angry young man, condescending jerk.

CH.IV.Pg.48.L4: If you so wanted to escape being your mother's son you wouldn't have returned to work at a television studio.

CH.VIII.Pg.101.L5: He kept hounding me to act again, and now that I've said yes, he's even more moody than before.

Mir Adnan Akbar is a hero of the novel "Broken Verses". In different phrases and sentences, his description is as charming, devoted son, unpredictable, and comic hero. He'd spent his life being a perfect gentleman. He'd never been a flirt. He'd never been a rogue. He hated being the center of attention, but he wanted to be the center of his mother attention. He wanted to do the wrong thing, the bad thing. He wanted that his mother should remain his mother not any other person not do any other work. He wanted to show his mother all the things he wasn't sure he knew how to say. All his imperfections are portrayed as perfections. In L1, there is a sentence that generally describes those men with smiles and charms would make a woman forget her senses. Once the Scholar has said "Charm is the ability to insult people without offending them; nerdiness the reverse". It is rightly said because to attract woman with charm and smile is merely equal to her insult if she is attracted towards man. In L2, Ed is not listening to any of the gossips still his character depicts goodness because he is a man and a man cannot be wrong. In line 3, there are some phrases for his personality like "Screwball comic hero", "devoted son", "angry young man", "condescending jerk" and all these phrases portrays his superiority and arrogance that is not in a sense of negativity but suits on him. These phrases are a perfect mixture of perfection of Ed's character as that he is crazy hero, dedicated son and superior jerk with some traits of angry man. From this it can be analyzed that attitude and arrogance suit on Ed's personality. It is not something that is against his character even if it is showing positive aspect of his persona. He is also depicted as an unpredictable man. In L4 and 5, first he wanted to escape from his mother but he used to ask his mother to stay at home but when she stayed at home, he become more angry than before. He is portrayed as unpredictable, he never knows where he is going until he gets there, he is so random, He is always growing, learning, changing, he never the same person twice. But one thing it can be sure of about Ed; he always did exactly what he wanted to do.

#### 3.2.1.2 Father of Aasmaani

CH.II.Pg.L1: There was a promise of extraordinary beauty in each angle of his face.

CH.II.Pg.L2: Consistency, thy name is Dad.

CH.XVIII.Pg.L3: Fathers were efficient in matters of finance, and rewiring.

CH.XVIII.Pg.L4: They didn't lack emotion; they simply didn't express it except in tiny bursts. And they were always there. That was their most abiding quality-their thereness. That was dad, that was fathers.

Aasmaani's father is portrayed as a token of beauty and having a charming persona. In L1, there is a sentence in which his extraordinary beauty is mentioned. In L2, he has been related to consistency. He was a man of thought who has prevailed, and could preserve his dignity and standing in the world only by acting on principles and clear comprehensions. That's why his daughter called him consistent "Consistency, thy name is Dad". In different sentences, his fatherhood and relation with his daughter is depicted so generous and humble. For his daughter, he is the man who taught her how to lead, respect others and always stand up for herself. In the same day or even the same hour, he morphed into her action-packed friend who is always down to play. In L3 and 4, Aasmaani herself says that her father is always there for her and it is most abiding quality of fathers as she stated "That was dad, that was fathers". To her, the word "father" was another name for love.

#### 3.2.1.3 Poet Omi

CH.V.Pg.L1: I love for the way he chose to say it and for free use of 'shit'.

CH.VII.Pg.L2: Poet didn't believe in marriage- the illegitimate child of a rich landowner.

CH.IX.Pg.L3: He was fearless, utterly.



CH.XXIV.Pg.L4: What struck me most was, simply, the greatness of his heart. Here was a man who faced exile, imprisonment, betrayal, and deprivation without losing his sense of wonder.

Poet Omi was a great poet in the novel. But he is appreciated despite his spoiled behavior. In L1, the use of his slang “shit” is even appreciated the way he used it without any hesitation. In L2, there is description that he didn’t believe in marriage that’s why he didn’t marry with Aasmaani’s mother but loved her most and much of his poetry was devoted to Aasmaani. One example from his poetry is:

Oh, love, I am awash with tenderness now.

Your eyes, your mouth, the taste of you.

Samina, how lucky we have been (CH.XXI.Pg.306).

But he didn’t believe in marriage because he thought it doesn’t last forever. For the poet, marriage does not create love; and love does not require marriage as it is nothing more than a commitment, more like superglue. Therefore, for him, it forces those who are unhappy together, to remain together even if they’d rather kill themselves. He was a man and child of rich landowner so if he didn’t marry there would be no effect on his reputation but his affair with Samina has killed her repute. In L3, there is a sentence that depicts his courageous attitude. In L4, one more feature is mentioned that is his greatness of heart. Throughout his life he remained brave and courageous even he has suffered prison, exile, dispossession and disloyalty. Danger gleams like sunshine to his eyes. He was brave man who has fought in the storms of fate.

#### 3.2.1.4 Mirza

CH.XII.Pg.L1: He was Mirza—the most beautiful, arrogant man I had ever known.

CH.XII.Pg.L2: An angel undomesticated and with no need for earthly morality.

Ch.XIV.Pg.L3: He was smiling pleasantly.

Mirza is a minor character in the novel. He is portrayed beautiful and elegant, a man full of grace. His simplicity is the eventual sophistication. In character, in manner, in style, in all the things, his supreme excellence was his simplicity. In L1, he is described as beautiful and arrogant but arrogance is not used in a negative sense but as a positive aspect of his personality. In L2, he is depicted as an angel who was the dispenser and administrator of the great generosity toward humans. In L3, his smile is described as pleasant. His smile was one of those rare beams with a quality of everlasting reassurance in it because he grinned understandingly—much more than understandingly.

#### 3.2.2 Female Characters

##### 3.2.2.1 Aasmaani Inqalab

CH.I.Pg.L1: But Beema used to whisper in my ear, ‘Azure’. Aasmaani can also mean azure. She’d say, without the gloom.

CH.I.Pg.L2: The enigmatic-woman act is so overdone.

CH.II.Pg.L3: I looked away, aware of feeling smaller, more useless.

CH.III.Pg.L4: Just live in an abstract, self-referential world.

In L1, Aasmaani is depicted as “azure” that also means sky but there is a phrase used for her that is “without gloom”. It means that without gloom azure has no worth so is the case of Aasmaani. The Woman appears to be degraded in the sense that she is assumed to be either a slow worker or the gender that does not produce a good output or does not finish whatever it is that she is working on. As described in the L2, “enigmatic-woman act is so overdone” it means that the capacity of a woman to work outside the house by implying that she is fit only to be a housewife, to do house chores, and to take care of her husband and their children. Aasmaani, in L3, herself feels as “smaller” and “useless”. These adjectives are used to degrade her persona because she is depicted as worthless and valueless. In L4, she is herself saying that she lived in an abstract world. World is not abstract but it is all about her brain which was abstract that’s why she thought of herself as useless.

##### 3.2.2.2 Shehnaz Saeed

CH.V.Pg.L1: As she stepped from light tile to dark, her existence a strobe-light illusion.

CH.V.Pg.L2: Every emerging wrinkle delineated by the afternoon sun.

CH.V.Pg.L3: My heart is a spoilt child, demanding all the attention...

CH.V.Pg.L4: We never really know how our brains work, do we?

CH.XVII.Pg.L5: For all his faults, she'll blame herself, not him.

In line 1, strobe light is compared with her existence and it is used to produce regular flashes of light like the charm of Shehnaz Saeed is giving the impression of sparks to the readers. In L2, her beauty is degraded because she is linked with having a face with emerging wrinkles. It shows that injuries heal, but wrinkles are the wounds of time. No doubt she has suffered a lot for being an actress, mother, daughter-in-law and wife. There was a story attached in each wrinkle on her forehead—stories of her lonely life were locked there. In L3, her depiction is that her heart is like a spoilt child that demands attention. It means there is no sign of maturity in her. It is commonly noticed that most of the women fight for men's attention. They do it in different ways. Some tempt men; some shame men; some scold men; some befriend men; some agree with. Attention can be sought out in many ways: fame seeking, selfie-posting, provocative clothing, creating drama, coy flirting, and make-up. Because men do not seek attention in these same ways and in fact to get attention in this way might make many of them feel uncomfortable, they don't understand it and so they love to criticize it. They call females "attention-whores." Same is the case with Shehnaz Saeed as she was also an attention seeker. In L4, Shehnaz Saeed is asking about all the women that their brain works or not because women really don't know that whether their brains work or not. That means women are not capable of doing work properly because they don't know how to use brain but rather they work with emotions not with brain. In L5, it is described that Shehnaz Saeed used to take all blames on her of his son's faults. No doubt, mothers are playing the role of martyr. Others sincerely wear the cape of responsibilities and think about what it is they didn't say that could have made a difference, what they could have probably done wrong or how they could have done things differently.

### 3.2.2.3 Samina Akram

CH.III.Pg.L1: She was an unspoken presence standing between Dad and me.

CH.X.Pg.L2: I saw all my mother's stories of contentment and repose as nothing more than fairy stories.

CH.X.Pg.L3: Everything you ever did, Mama, was nothing.

CH.XVIII.Pg.L4: Mothers are not supposed to choose anyone else over their children. You unnatural woman.

Samina Akram was the step-mother of Aasmaani and she is considered as an unspoken presence between Aasmaani and her father as described in line 1. She is just an unspoken person who is worthless and nothing else. Her moral value is degraded as described in L2 and 3. In L2, Samina's son is depicting that all the contentment of his mother was just fairy tales nothing else. And she did nothing for him as described in L3. Even the word 'woman' shows that a woman stems from a 'man'. She is being treated as second class citizen, sometimes less than that has been an ongoing problem that she still has to deal with. It is common to blame mothers as described in L4, that mothers should not choose anyone else over their children. Samina is called "unnatural woman" because she was a working lady, she didn't choose only motherhood that's why she is not considered a good mother. A relationship must include more than one party. The mother-child relationship, good or bad, is a reflection on two generations not just one. It simply isn't fair to place all the blame on Mom for a poor relationship with her child.

Mothering is tough, one of the hardest jobs in the world. Motherhood is degraded in the novel. Here are some examples from the novel:

But if a woman was a mother, Dad was simply unable to view her life in any way except as it might relate to the well-being of her child. (CH.VI)

I saw all my mother's stories of contentment and repose as nothing more than fairy stories. (CH.X)

Everything you ever did, Mama, was nothing. (CH.X)

Mothers are not supposed to choose anyone else over their children. You unnatural woman. (CH.XVIII)

-my mother didn't raise any bigoted children. (CH XXI)

To hell with my mother and letters. (CH.XI)

I wasn't the mother I should have been. (CH.XVII)

Most women sincerely but mistakenly believe that anguish in their relationships with their mothers is inevitable because their mothers are so limited, so dependent, or so terrible. Mothers are either idealized or blamed for everything that goes wrong. Motherhood is undervalued in the novel. Motherhood is being treated as second class citizen, sometimes less than that has been an ongoing problem that she still has to deal with. Concerns about mothers also shaped late-twentieth-century beliefs about psychiatric medications. During the height of the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s, Valium advertisements depicted "psychoneurotic" women like "Jan"

who required pharmaceutical treatment because of their failure or refusal to attract husbands. And in the 1990s, advertisements for SSRI antidepressants introduced women whose “successful” treatment was marked by babies and wedding rings. Similarly, in the novel motherhood is devalued so many times as it can be seen from above mentioned examples.

#### 4. Conclusion

Feminist stylistics, which has its roots both in feminism and stylistics, “has suggested ways in which those concerned with the representation of gender relations might draw on linguistic and language analysis to develop a set of tools which could expose the workings of gender at a range of different levels in texts” (Mills, 1995, p. 198). This study has shown that the feminist stylistic framework of Sara Mills has been useful in investigative representations of characters at the word, phrase/sentence, and discourse levels. By identifying dominant and recurring features of characterization, the study has shown the significant differences between the women and men in the novel “Broken Verses” by “Kamila Shamsie”.

Women characters differ from the men in that there are more portrayals given to them which relate to their thoughts, emotions, experiences, vulnerability towards men, and their physical characteristics. Men, on the other hand, are described according to their physical strength, personalities, attitudes, which dominate women.

The bodily descriptions given to women are more complex and rather sensationalized than those given to men. This shows that women characterized in this manner are described according to their sensuality and charm. This reflection on the fragmentation of women and men reveals that there are more descriptions of the bodies of women than those of men. Physical description of women includes their bodies as a whole, and, more abundantly, in fragmented parts. The story of the novel reveals that the narrator’s portrayals of women characters differed from her description of the men. When it comes to the woman’s physique, the narrator gives more detailed and creative descriptions of them.

In a nutshell, there are a number of observations on the way that women and men are represented and described in the novel. The text draws on conventional gender information in the context of Pakistani men and women and in a conventionally male-controlled society. The foremost difference that the novel highlights is not much on the physical attributes of women and men but rather on their attitudes, beliefs, morals, priorities and preferences in life. For women there is degradation but not for men in the novel.

#### References

- Cameron, D. (1992). *Feminism and linguistic theory* (2nd ed.). Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-22334-3>
- Coffey, L. (2013). “*Innocent Until Proven Filthy*”: A Corpus-Based Critical Stylistic Analysis of Representations of Men in Women’s Magazines. Doctoral thesis, University of Huddersfield.
- Denopra, M. M. P. (2012). *A Feminist Stylistic Analysis of Selected Short Stories by Kerima Polotan-Tuvera*. University of Philippines, Diliman.
- Finch, G. (2000). *Linguistic Terms and Concepts*. New York: Palgrave. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-27748-3>
- Gohar, K. K. (2011). The Hideous Beauty of Bird-Shaped Burns: Transnational Allegory and Feminist Rhetoric in Kamila Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows*. *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies*, 3, 2.
- Hussain, S. (2011). *Women, Tradition and Transformation: A Feminist Reading of Kamila Shamsie’s Fiction*. LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.
- Kiran, S. (2017). Politics of Identity in Kamila Shamsie’s Novels. *Indian Scholar*, 3, 220–229.
- Litosseliti, L. (2006). *Gender & Language: Theory and Practice*. London: Hodder Education.
- Mills, S. (1995). *Feminist Stylistics*. London: Routledge.
- Mills, S. (1996). *Feminist Reading/Feminist Readings*. Brighton: Harvester.
- Mills, S. (2003). *Gender and Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511615238>
- Mills, S. (2008). *Language and Sexism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511755033>
- Moore, C. (2015). *A Queen’s Reputation: A Feminist Analysis of The Cultural Appropriations of Cleopatra* (p. 297). Honors Theses.

- Savinainen, R. (2001). *Gender Specific Features of Male/Female Interaction in A Popular Romantic Novel by Barbara Cartland*. Retrieved from <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:ju-2001867069>
- Shahid, M. (2017). *Reversing the stereotypes of the Orient, and analyzing Nationalism and Transnationalism in Burnt Shadows*. M.Phil thesis. International Islamic University, Islamabad.
- Shenli, S. (2009). A Stylistic Analysis of “Miss Brill” by Katherine Mansfield. *Review of European Studies*, 1, 10. <https://doi.org/10.5539/res.v1n2p117>
- Short, M. (1996). *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and Prose*. New York: Longman.
- Simpson, P. (1997). *Language through Literature: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Versay K. N. (2008). *Representations of Malay Women in Dina Zaman’s Selected Short Stories: A Feminist Stylistic Analysis*. Master’s thesis, Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University.

### Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author, with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).