



RESEARCH PAPER

Shackled Words Seeking Transcendence: A Postcolonial Existential Feminist Analysis of Faiqa Mansab's *Sufi Storyteller*

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes Faiqa Mansab's *The Sufi Storyteller* through the theoretical lens of Postcolonial Existential Feminism. The *Sufi Storyteller* foregrounds feminine characters, vanquished by oppressive patriarchal society and post-colonial legacies. By doing a close textual analysis and adopting a qualitative method of research, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concept of double deprecation of subaltern women and Simon De Beauvoir's idea of transcendence of women are incorporated to conduct this research. The findings unveil that while women in the novel face layered suppression, Sufi storytelling and autonomous means of emancipation become source of transcendence, breaking the inflicted restrictions. Role of trauma resulting in silencing and invisibility of women, and the ways to grapple with the traumatic episodes, consequently leading to transforming women's identity could be the subject of future research.

KEYWORDS Postcolonial Feminism, Existential Feminism, Transcendence, Double Marginalization

Introduction

The core book for the present study is *The Sufi Storyteller* by Faiqa Mansab. *The Sufi Storyteller* is a murder mystery, eventually leading to the restoration of a lost connection between a mother and daughter. The Sufi stories in this novel play a foundational role as it has been used as an epistemic frame and as a plot device. There are multiple stories within this one story. The mother and the daughter both use Sufi stories to recall and heal from their past traumas. The novel is divided into three parts named as 1) The Beginning of the End 2) The Beginning 3) The End of the Beginning. The First part of the novel introduces Layla as a professor of *Sufi Stories and their Alchemy* in an American university and a murdered woman is found in her office in red cloak. Layla is seen on a quest to find her long-lost mother-Mira Heshmet, an oral Sufi teller, with whom she eventually reunites at the end of first part while both were uncovering the concealed symbolic meaning of the murdered girl. The second part of the book *The Beginning* traces back the life of Mira, an American journalist, an abducted woman in Afghanistan, forced into marriage with Gulraiz. It shows the transformation of Mira from an independent woman to a detained one within the shackles of a patriarchal man while seeking refuge and learning from the Sufi stories of Kamli. This portion also shows Mira's escape from confinement to her hometown. The Third fragment of the book divulges the criminal of committed murders of the three women, exposing Mira's son aka Professor Reza (Hamza) as the real culprit while Mira is killed by her own son at the end and Layla is left alone to convey the hidden healing power of Sufi Stories to future generations.

The theoretical stance through which the research is conducted combines postcolonial feminism and existential Feminism. On postcolonial feminist side, Gayatri Spivak's stance of silencing of women by both patriarchy and colonialism is applied. She warns against representing *subaltern voices* without knowing one's position. Spivak's stance

of *silencing subaltern voices* appears in the text as concealed stories of women, murdered female body and authority of western language over oral. *The Sufi Storyteller* clearly presents that women can retrieve their voice back and assert themselves by telling stories. While dealing with existential feminism, the stance of Simone De Beauvoir about freedom and women subjectivity is applied. She argues that women are represented as *Other* in relation to men. She presents women as trapped within the shackles of immanence and their emancipation lie in transcendence. As in the novel, Layla and Mira living with the tormented past breaks the silence and find their voice through the spiritual journey of storytelling, fulfilling Beauvoir's idea of transcendence surpassing the cruel restrictions. The two combined lens will assist to show how the two women in the novel find their voice in a doubly marginalized world through Sufi storytelling. In conclusion, Postcolonial Existential Feminism uncovers that, *The Sufi Storyteller* is a novel dealing with the liberation and expression of women within a postimperial society. The findings reveal how Layla and Mira spiritually transcend from their confined roles and assert themselves with the help of Sufi stories despite the domination of cultural constraints. It shows that women can represent themselves freely with traditional means which particularly in this novel are Sufi stories. The analysis reveal that women can emancipate by reinterpreting means of freedom according to their own choice or will.

Literature Review

As no previous work has been done on this book so, Gulab (2025) while reviewing the book *The Sufi Storyteller* writes the early reading of the book suggests that the story will revolve around unfolding the mystery of committed crime but as one read further, it surprisingly unveils

the accurate messages hidden in Sufi stories. As Namrata (2025) asserts that "Sufism here is neither a plot device nor an aesthetic flourish—it is an ontological stance" (para. 08). Rehman (2025) states *The Sufi Storyteller* is written in the form of *dastangoi* which is an archive and traditional writing style of story in Urdu. In an interview with Sonya Rehman, Faiqa Mansab says that *dastangoi* and stories enriched with Sufism are closely related as she mentions further, "I wanted to explore how those ancient modes of storytelling could speak to our modern anxieties and the disconnection we feel in this increasingly fast-paced, digitally advancing world" (para. 09). Later, Shaffi (2025) declares that Mansab mother's art of oral storytelling inspired her to write *The Sufi Storyteller* in *dastangoi* form.

Theoretical Framework

Spivak's postcolonial feminism and Beauvoir's existential feminism are used as main lenses to carry the study of Mansab's, *The Sufi Storyteller*. Feminism as a literary theory argues that unequal treatment of men and women are not innate rather it is socially and culturally constructed and ideologically promoted and fostered. Mary Wollstonecraft in her book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, laid the foundation of Feminism. She presented the idea of providing education to women for their intellectual development which was carried on further by John Stuart Mill in his book *The Subjection of Women*. Feminism is divided into three waves, the first one concerning with the legal rights of property, vote, ownership of women but it was restricted to white and middle-class European women. The second wave of Feminism presented issue of traditional gender roles by Betty Friedan. This phase advocated social and cultural rights of women in education, pay, employment and domestic roles.

Simone De Beauvoir's idea was prominent in the second wave. Beauvoir in her book, *The Second Sex* (1949), presents the foundational feminist idea by linking it with existentialism, influenced by Jean Paul Satre and asserts "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (Beauvoir, 1949, p. 273). This formed the basis of separating biological

sex from socially made gender. The third wave of Feminism focuses on the diversity and intersectionality of women arguing that women are different on the basis of class, race, religion, background, culture and cannot be apposite in a single mold for representation. In the present era, which is regarded as the fourth wave of feminism, the movement has become digitally global as #MeToo, addressing the issues of sexual violence, harassment, biasedness, exploitation and many more.

Postcolonial theory explores the reverberations of colonial supremacy on identity, language, culture, knowledge and ideology even its everlasting impacts on the formally colonized world after the termination of colonial power. It also points how the non-western world is painted as subservient and primitive by the Europeans and challenges the Eurocentric approach of history by interrogating the power relations between the colonizer and colonized. Frantz Fanon idea is the foundation of postcolonial theory. He demonstrates that Europeans portrayal of the western world makes the colonized feel estranged and they inevitably feel backward about themselves ultimately leading towards psychological effects of colonialism.

Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978), argued that western colonial powers justify the mauling and ill treatment of the colonized by presenting the later as irrational, exotic and inferior, leading to their misrepresentation by the colonized lens. Homi K. Bhabha presented his view that colonial domination brings out mixed cultures by incomplete *mimicry*, an amalgamation of East and West, leading to *hybrid* identities which creates feelings of *ambivalence* in the colonizer and colonized, acting as a strong resistant against the established imperial power. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak interlinks postcolonialism with feminism. In her famous essay, *Can the subaltern speak?* (1988), she states that women are marginalized by the dominant power structures, both by patriarchal society and colonial power, often leading to their silence and misrepresentation.

Existentialism is a philosophy that claims human's purpose and meaning of life is defined by their own freedom of choice, in others words, life is meaningless, the search for purpose is purely subjective. Soren Kierkegaard is the father of existentialism which proposed that truth holds individuality. Jean Paul Satre is the most famous existentialist who argued that *existence precedes essence*, and humans are solely accountable for their life choices. Later on, Albert Camus linked *Existentialism* with *Absurdism* debating that life is absurd and humans search for meaning of life in a meaningless world. Simon De Beauvoir, relates existentialist ideas with feminism, claiming that women fixed cultural, societal and biological roles imprison them in *Immanence* and they fail to define their existence by transcending these constraints according to their free will.

The culmination of these three theories, feminism, postcolonialism and existentialism as postcolonial existential feminism, offers a very powerful insight to analyze *The Sufi Storyteller*.

Drawing on Gaytari Spivak's silencing of the subaltern women and De Beauvoir's transcendence of women, allows to explore how the women voices are muted by male-dominant society and colonial rule. This lens helps to trace the fragmented identity of women as a result of traumas and oppression by patriarchs and the reformation of the same identity by freedom of choice. It exposes how voice of the doubly subjugated group is controlled by the power holding structures, particularly by male subjects and the rule establishing colonial masters. The chosen theoretical framework helps to expose the existential quest of women in the novel to emancipate and find their own voice by means of *storytelling*.

Material and Methods

This research applies qualitative approach to examine *The Sufi Storyteller* by utilizing the lens of Spivak's postcolonial feminism and Beauvoir's existential feminism to explore the transcendental journey of doubly marginalized and immanent women. The primary source of data for this study is the original text of the novel. A close textual reading has been done to explore the underlying meaning, themes and key narrative elements that corresponds accurately with the chosen theoretical framework.

Results and Discussion

This research uses the lens of postcolonial existential feminism to investigate the journey of two protagonists in *The Sufi Storyteller* namely Layla and Mira as the prisoners of immanence towards liberation through spiritual way. The work includes every possible evidence from the text to justify the applied stance. The study contains evidences to show the quietening of women's voice by commanding patriarchs and post-imperial agents. It shows the transference of Mira and Layla towards transcendence through Sufi storytelling. Spivak and Beauvoir stance helps to apprehend the problem of misrepresentation of women's voice in a patriarchal and foreign society and how women assert themselves through spiritual Sufi stories, full of extensive messages, motivation and guidance.

Spivak's stance from her famous essay *Can the subaltern speak?* of misrepresentation and silencing of subaltern voices by patriarchal and foreign agents is evident in the very beginning of *The Sufi Storyteller* where a murdered female body is found in library by Layla for it was her office. When Layla saw the dead body, she was terrified to see the blood but later discovered that bright crimson was a red cloak to cover the naked female body, "The red cloak was too bright in contrast, too reminiscent of life to be attached to something dead" (Mansab, 2025, p. 09). This clearly fulfills Spivak's stance for a dead body of female is found in library, a sacred institution of knowledge and learning where everyone is considered equal irrespective of the gender. The lifeless body of girl presents how she is muted by patriarchal agent for she was murdered by professor Reza whose identity is revealed at the end of the novel as Hamza-Layla's brother. The voiceless girl cannot speak for herself, she cannot tell her story and throughout the novel the foreign agents like detectives, police, clues will speak on her behalf and will act as her, as they will try to find out about the murderer.

Another justification of Spivak's point appears in the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* told by Mira. The daughter of an old woman married against her will and left her mother alone to live in the woods only later, to be left alone by the man for whom she abandoned her mother. The daughter vented out her anger against her own mother but still took care of her. She used to send her daughter with the food as the old woman felt happy in the presence of her little granddaughter. One day, the wolf appeared on the door of the old woman and she walked in its mouth bravely while the wolf waited for the little girl in red hood to devour it. As soon as little red walked in her grandmother's house, she recognized the wolf and behead it with an iron axe and grandmother comes out alive from the mouth of the wolf. Later, the grandmother says "Within you lives the story of the wild wolf who is Woman" (Mansab, 2025, p. 110). The little red is being advised by her grandmother not to forget the wild spirit that lives within a woman-her potential, vivacity, self-spark. The little red girl has gone through metamorphosis and acknowledged her value and the feminine strength, the energy which is often suppressed by societal constraints. Mira further tells that this story was replaced and changed by dominant voices and patriarchs who could not bear the feminine verve and changed the narrative, as Mansab (2025) says "Power was taken away from female characters and female imagination" (p. 112). In the new narrative constructed by a man, the little red was saved by a woodcutter or huntsman from the wolf. This is clearly on line with the Spivak's argument that how women are subjugated by erasing their voice for a stout man cannot bear to be shown equivalent to a woman and hence the women are fallaciously represented by commanding power for "The storyteller was a man and did not want to tell the story of a powerful woman" (Mansab, 2025, p. 112).

One more validation of Spivak's argument appears when professor Reza was giving her remarks about the book written by Layla. Reza tries to show his irritation against Layla's point for she made a claim in her book that as cooking and looking after the children was considered only the work of women in the same manner, women used to tell stories to their children which also acted as a way of strengthening of bond with their beloved ones. In the same manner, weaving also was mostly done by women as Layla came to know about this through historical evidences. On this Reza says "Forgive me for asking but isn't that a bit far-fetched? I mean 'only women' were weavers and storytellers?" (Mansab, 2025, p. 83). This shows how a patriarchal subject questions a claim made by the subordinate women and tries to challenge her voice or re-present them according to their own thinking and beliefs. Further on, when he wasn't able to re-assert the voice of a woman he tries to belittle her by saying storytelling isn't a "world changing discovery as the wheel" (Mansab, 2025, p. 83). Gul speaks in supports of Layla "Ann Bergen says that weaving was the feminine semiotic" (Mansab, 2025, p. 85).

Gul was a confident and fearless learner, the most favorite student of Layla and wanted to pursue her research in Sufi stories. Her negation against the supreme voice, eagerness to gain knowledge and be a disciple of Layla as both of them loved the hidden powerful messages of Sufi stories could not be tolerated by Reza and Gul was met with the same fate, for she was killed by Reza. He being a typical patriarch cannot tolerate that woman can be right and intellectual superior than him. As Mansab (2025) declares, "Some people find women and their speech unimportant or too much to bear" (p. 230). Therefore, Gul was murdered by Reza and snatched her powerful voice was snatched from her resulting in silencing her forever. As Reza says, "I enjoyed killing her in a way I didn't enjoy the others" (Mansab, 2025, p. 294).

Beauvoir asserts that women are imprisoned in immanence. They are trapped in the shackles of their confined roles and responsibilities imposed on them by patriarchal agents. This lines in with the monotonous routine of Layla. She is a professor of oral traditions and women history in an American University. For the past thirty-two years, she is following the same routine, she wakes up early in the morning, goes half an hour before to avoid the crowd and always stops at the café before going to work. At café, she was habitual of having the usual chai-latte with lemon muffin. She used to sit by the window and enjoyed her breakfast while caressing Sultan-her pet cat. She had become such accustomed with her routine that it had become a habit of her as Mansab (2025) says "Layla found routine enriching; it so often slipped into ritual" (p. 07). For Layla, the unchanging and repetitive routine had become a sort of liturgy for her and she became trapped in this as Immanent being. She limited herself in immanence- the cyclic routine of her life and any break from it "sent alarm bells ringing inside her head" (Mansab, 2025, p. 08). She became so absorbed in this pattern of life that she didn't change it and it was just a routine of her life, to keep herself busy. But as the novel progresses, Layla finds her means of transcendence to escape the shackles of immanent being, fulfilling Beauvoir's idea that women can find their own means of transcendence according to their own will or choice. Layla expresses herself through Sufi stories, for instance in one of her classes, she tells the story of scorpion who seeks help from frog to cross the river, promising not to sting it on the way but he did for it was the nature of scorpion. This story presents the idea of freedom of choice that defines us which ultimately is the source of emancipation for Layla. It clearly validates the formerly stated idea of Beauvoir's transcendence.

The idea of entrapped in immanence is also evident from the other characters of the novel. Hasina-the foster mother of Layla remains enmeshed in the agonizing memories of her past. She had gone through excruciating experiences in the olden days of her life before adopting Layla. Hasina was a victim of forced marriage and domestic violence which eventually led to her divorce, lost support of her own family and was left alone. Hasina has found her healing in the form of cooking, "For Hasina, the kitchen was home" (Mansab, 2025, p. 30). She is always seen in kitchen, cooking something and chanting about the magical

powers of cooking. She always believed the more sweat and energy put into cooking, the more convalescence it became. Hasina believed that every separate ingredient and spices in any dish holds different power as she recounts "Mint is cooling" (Mansab, 2025, p. 35) and "Cumin. Always use with potato for its digestive properties" (Mansab, 2025, p. 36). For Hasina, food was a kind of language which could not be used carelessly otherwise it would lose its original meaning and taste. Food and cooking with the right amount of ingredients, in the required time were means of transcendence from her brutal past.

One more affirmation of Beauvoir's immanence is visible in the tale of *Cinderella*. The typical fantasy story of a one good girl, being obedient and kind to her cruel step-mother and sisters despite of their ill-behavior with her. Mira tells her daughter in some versions of the story, Cinderella had become so customary with the inflicted oppression and violence that despite being married with the king, "Prince often found her sleeping in front of the fireplace, and eating crumbs off the table rather than the feast" (Mansab, 2025, p. 242). Often when the king and the queen mistreated her, she accepted it as normal and became unresponsive towards it. It clarifies the manacles of immanence for Cinderella-the long endurance of oppression, violence and maltreatment made her habitual of this silencing that she became trapped in this immanent behavior and remained caught up in it despite being freed from it. As Mansab (2025) asserts to justify it, "What we tolerate is, what we accept as truth" (p. 242).

The culmination of Spivak's silencing of women by patriarchy and foreign agents, and Beauvoir's idea of women as immanent means, trying to transcend through their own means can be verified by the character of Mira Heshmet- the mother of Layla around which part two of the novel is centered. Mira was silenced by both patriarchy and colonial power. Before becoming a storyteller, Mira was a journalist who told war stories and went on expedition to Afghanistan. The chief's son, Gulraiz was lured by the foreign beauty and forced her into marriage. Mira became attracted with the "warmth of such cozy intimacy" (Mansab, 2025, p. 139). She was not aware of the evil intentions of a tribal patriarch man and as a result got married. Even on the day of marriage, she was drugged so she could easily say yes to the vows of her wedding. Soon, she realized that she has become the prisoner of this foreign man who only in scripted record was her husband. This progenitor, Gulraiz, muted the bold and confident journalist Mira by forcefully marrying her. She became mad during the early days for being imprisoned as wife in a foreign land that once she said to Gulraiz "You'll be chief of ashes, you pig" (Mansab, 2025, p. 143) and Gulraiz became furious at her that's when Mira realized the power of words and she never used that word again. Pig is a common word used by Americans to refer to an inconsiderate, dirty and bad person. But in Afghani culture, Pig referred to something haram, and immoral. So, it is evident that Mira was turned voiceless by the foreign power and gradually started to become a mute subordinate woman. It clarifies that colonial power makes women voiceless without acknowledging their position in their homeland.

Mira starts to get confined in the manacles of immanence-woman role as a wife, as a mother and other responsibilities instilled on her by the customs of a foreign society. She started wearing heavily embroidered, mirror worked, knee length frocks and covered her head with a scarf or dupatta. She was raped daily by her husband and whenever she refuses to get intimate, she was brutally beaten and exiled in a cave as punishment. As Mansab (2025) mentions "It was slap and punches then one day he broke my arm" (p. 149). Gulraiz used the wooden staff- a symbol of man's bravery as an "instrument of torture" to break the bones and muscles of her wife (Mansab, 2025, p. 156). Mira being a new person in Afghanistan wasn't aware that role of a wife also involved to be used as a tool of sexual gratification by husband and refusal means inflicting punishment upon oneself. It was merely the beginning of being circled in a web of immanent role as a woman. She was not allowed to go outside due to the fear of escape as she tried one or two times but failed. The idea was slowly getting installed in her mind that a wife cannot do anything against her husband's will- getting caught up in immanence as Gulraiz says, "You cannot go anywhere

because it is not what I want. I am a man and you are a weak woman" (Mansab, 2025, p. 159).

Mira bore three children to Gulraiz along with few miscarriages. Although she tried her best not to conceive the children of Gulraiz but Mira became aware that it was another part of role of a woman as wife. She says, "When you're a prisoner, your own body is alien...It accepts the invader's semen like a blind, ungrateful monster" (Mansab, 2025, p. 165). Even Mira tried to kill herself after hearing the news of her first pregnancy but all in vain. Shortly, she began to accept the reality and by six years she has become a totally new person, "timid and weak, even fearful" who could now speak the language of the foreign land and has got accustomed to their culture and set of roles and responsibilities (Mansab, 2025, p. 185). She became so habitual with the immanent role that at one point she favored the safety of children in their one room house rather than to escape this confinement as she says "Did freedom mean more than my children's life?" (Mansab, 2025, p. 184).

Mira found solace in the stories of Kamli which eventually became her means of emancipation from the iron chains of immanence. Kamli was a Malang and mystic person who was always there for Mira in her punishment cave. She told stories to Mira while dressing and taking care of her wounds only given by Gulraiz with herbal things. It was through Kamli stories, that Mira learned the art of being a trickster which eventually helped her to escape at the end. Mira said "I had to find a balance between what was outside of me and what was within me, what was overt and what was covert" (Mansab, 2025, p. 187). She learned to layer her personality as the Sufi stories, inner skin divulging the existent and meaningful side while the outer surface projected the apparent one. Once Kamli told her the story of a sloth bear and jackal. Sloth bear's whole body was stuck in papaya field, a jackal passed by and asked about this. So, the sloth bear decided to fool him by saying that owner of the field will force me to eat chicken as punishment. Jackal offered himself in his place to eat the chicken, got stuck and was killed by farmer the next morning. After this story of Kamli, Mira learned that being pretentious can be her source of escape so she started to become invisible and chalk her plan of escape step by step.

Every time she went for bath with the other ladies, Mira along with her children-Hamza and Sheharzade, would explore the secret passages and opening of the cave which she will use later at the perfect time of escape. She had also taught her children to swim under water, hide in caves for hours being silent and many other tricks that would help them. Finally, at the night of Nur's wedding-her eldest daughter, Mira escaped along with her two children. She had sewed a book for her children and written stories in it by herself which would help her children if they ever feel agitated and terrified during their still and ill-lit stay in caves. Again, the stories serve as a means of freedom and emancipation from their present immanent situation and Mira was being to recall this happiness as "It was called freedom" (Mansab, 2025, p. 200).

While Mira was on her way to American Embassy, she could no longer recognize herself as the former Mira before her imprisonment as Mansab (2025) mentions "It was hard to say my name, I no longer identified as that woman" (p. 214). Mira's identity, her voice of original self was so completely muffled and suppressed by the colonial and patriarchal agents that she became a stranger for herself. But as she was stepping towards her own country, she "could almost hear the chains breaking, the walls that had caged me came crushing down and set me free" (Mansab, 2025, p. 214). She was totally a different person now and would re-intertwine the patterns and shadows of herself with the leftover traces of her identity and self. Hence, she got engaged in the task of deliverance the true essence of stories, providing comfort and direction to the people in chaos of their life- the same stories in which Mira had found their home while being away from one. As Mansab (2025) says, "stories were still the precious shelter from the storms of life" (p. 310). At the end, the death of Mira indicates her eternal emancipation from the tormented past and

signifies herself becoming a story while seeking comfort from it, the never vanishing story from which others will seek guidance and carry her truth forward.

In conclusion, the study shows the stifling of women's voice by murder and constructing counter narrative of stories by male patriarchs. It depicts the imprisoning of women in immanence either in the form of monotonous routine, painful past or constraint societal roles as mother and wife. It clarifies the emancipation and liberation of women in the novel according to their freedom of choice, sometimes in the shape of cooking and seeking guidance to re-assert themselves by Sufi stories.

Conclusion

Faiqa Mansab's, *The Sufi Storyteller* is a Feminist Metafictional novel with Sufi elements. It is a multilayered novel as it contains numerous Sufi stories embedded with spiritual meaning and knowledge within the one nonlinear story. This study has explored *The Sufi Storyteller* through the lens of postcolonial existential feminism, drawing mainly on the stance of Gaytri Spivak double marginalization of women by patriarchy and postcolonial agents, and Beauvoir's view of transcendence of women surpassing the imposed societal constraints. This study implies that Mansab's *Sufi Storyteller* shows the silencing of women by dominant patriarchs and post imperial rule in the form of murdered female bodies, Mira's muteness and helplessness while being the victim of abduction and forced marriage by Gulraiz. The reassertion of the story of *Little red riding hood* in this study exposes the misrepresentation of women and the task of making women invisible by paterfamilias. The analysis of the novel reveals the confinement of women, representing immanence, by the character of Hasina being trapped in her painful past who emancipated by cooking. The main protagonist Mira Heshmet's imprisonment by her husband Gulraiz in a foreign land against her will shows the imposing idea of immanence on women in response to which transcended by the means of spiritual storytelling, seeking guidance from the formerly told stories of her cornerstone-Kamli. The closure of the study claims that the spiritual Sufi stories is the primary foundation for the resistant act of women's self-awareness against the restrictive bodies leading towards freedom. In conclusion, women can unfetter themselves from the forced societal principles and commanding figures correspondingly to their own choices.

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