

The Dynamics of Patriarchy and Female Agency in Mohammed Hanif's *Rebel English Academy*

1. Arslan Ahmed, 2. Dr Aamer Shaheen, 3. Dr Sadia Qamar

1. MPhil Scholar, Department of English Literature, Government College University, Faisalabad.

2, 3. Assistant Professor of English Literature, Department of English Literature, Government College University, Faisalabad.

Corresponding author: sadiaqamar@gcuf.edu.pk

Abstract

Mohammed Hanif's *Rebel English Academy* (2026) questions patriarchal influence on the lives of women, investigating the factors that maintain patriarchy. This study reveals the secrets of male domination over women. Through the discursive approach, Hanif refuses to support patriarchy and frames resistance by women. Through the feminist theories of bell hooks (1984) and Simone de Beauvoir (1953), this paper explains how male dominance is achieved through normalizing a system in which women are considered "the others" and biologically dependent on the men. Both theorists focus on women's evolution from a passive to active figure in the society. While Hanif's other works have been discussed through the lens of feminism, focusing on objectification and fragmentation of women, this study focuses on patriarchy and female resistance. Through different female characters, this study examines how women face difficulty in finding dignity, identity, and freedom within a patriarchal structure. This article uses feminism as a foundational framework to address women's agency as equal to men in the society. It does not only discuss the sufferings of women and patriarchal dominance; it also questions the factors that normalize the discrimination between genders as a compulsory process to maintain authority.

Keywords: Authority, Feminism, Mohammed Hanif, Patriarchy, *Rebel English Academy*, Resistance, The Others, Women's Agency

Introduction

Literature is a tool to decode realities of human nature. Through literary lens, it is revealed how societal norms and traditions assist certain people to dominate the rest. All literary works address such aspects of human nature, providing a pathway to understand the difference between good and evil in society. Therefore, literature seems to locate flaws in humanity, making it relevant to the real life. Hanif (2026) incorporates same approach in his novel, *Rebel English Academy*. He presents different societal factors which include political unrest, religious corruption, class struggle, and patriarchy. One of the most prominent themes in his novel is female resistance in a society where women are supposed to be under the control of men. Zutshi (2026, February 27, *Asian Reviews of Books*) highlights how women are controlled, and made a source of sexual gratification for men. Hanif quote: “it says in the book that women are your fields and you can enter them from any direction you wish to” (p. 28), shows the lack of freewill on the part of women even during a legitimate sexual contact with men. According to Imtiaz (2026, March 19, *Dawn Images*), this novel is a warning to break the cycles which lead to injustice in the society. Hanif, through characters like Baghi, Captain Gul, and Molly, explains how men are found dominating women in different ways. Baghi pretends to be sympathetic to Sabiha Bano, but in reality, he wants to get rid of her as soon as possible. Captain Gul, who is also a symbol of state apparatus, thinks it a hallmark of masculinity if he controls a woman. Molly, also a symbol of religious corruption, shows how men use social or religious codes to satisfy their own desire of control over women. bell hooks, in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984), talks about women’s perspective about education, power and sexual oppression. Sabiha Bano’s homework essays signify the importance of education for women to express her thoughts independently. *The Second Sex* (1953) by Simone de Beauvoir treats femininity as a social construction when it says “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (p. 273). Hanif also criticizes the unjust treatment of women by men, and through different characters, he presents certain factors that serve as a catalyst of male domination in society. Religion, social codes, institutional supremacy, and educational inequality shape out the position of men and women in society. Through a feminist perspective, this novel serves as a tool to identify male-oriented oppression, and tells how women can resist against patriarchy. The essays written by Sabiha Bano, her gun, and her dupatta all function as important symbols of feminist identity in this novel. This article aims at analyzing how women should understand their own importance in society and have to raise voice against gender discrimination. If men and women share equal rights in society, the society will definitely flourish, and in this way, gender discrimination will be eradicated through a sense of harmony between the genders.

Literature Review

A number of scholarships have discussed Hanif’s different works through various critical approaches. Many researchers have provided their useful insights exploring different themes in Hanif’s fictive works. Siraj et al. (2021) highlight “elements of women’s marginalization” in Hanif’s *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, arguing that women in Pakistani society are quite oppressed and helpless entities. They explicate Hanif’s portrayal of women as “victims of humiliation, discrimination, and patriarchy” highlighting the sufferings of Alice Bhatti because of her gender, religion, and lower social class (Siraj et al., 2021, p. 7427). This study throws light on how males dominate traditions and consider women weak

and subordinate to men for their survival. It also states that violence against women has become a widespread social reality in societies like Pakistan where patriarchy persists uncontrollably (p. 7429). Men in control treat women just like a business deal or a card game (p. 7430). The study exposes cruel behavior of a patriarchal society in a satirical manner. Female characters are forced to remain careful in their dress, speech, and actions as they are continuously judged by the society they live in. The study emphasizes that women become defensive in order to survive under the male dominance (p. 7428). It shows that female resistance often appears in the form of survival, silence, and self-protection, and not in the form of a loud rebellion. According to the study, women are mentioned along the material things as a famous saying “Zan, Zar, Zameen” (p. 7427) shows men treating women as a property without feelings and emotions. Siraj at el. also quote hooks (1981) argument about feminism as a tool to end sexism (p. 7428) as sexism affects both men and women negatively. This scholarship investigates role of women as an individual who is denied freedom in a patriarchal society. It also examines how Hanif’s female characters experience fear and social pressure because of male controlling figures like husbands (p. 7430). This study notices that women are considered endangered species in Pakistani society, and women are instant submissive figures which require men for livelihood and fortification (p. 7429). This dependence allows men to operate violence and discrimination against women. Through the character of Alice Bhatti, this study discusses women facing continuous threats of harassment at their professional workplace (p. 7431). Overall, Hanif presents the painful realities of women’s lives in a social system where gender inequality is maintained through traditional practices.

Riaz et al. (2023) discuss feminism and patriarchal oppression in Hanif’s *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. They explain that feminism emerged as a response to patriarchal social order where men are superior and hold significant positions in society (p. 310). They talk about the women who have always struggled for “equal rights, respect and other rights that men have already acquired” (p. 310). The article investigates that how patriarchal interpretations of religion are often used to exploit women and deny them justice (p. 314). According to the researchers, Islam itself provides rights and dignity to women (p. 315), but society misinterprets religious teachings for male benefit. Riaz et al. highlight different perspectives about women’s independence in the society in different religions (p. 315). The study highlights that women are marginalized because of cultural traditions and patriarchal thinking rather than religion itself. The study also focuses on women’s resistance against authoritarian and patriarchal systems. It explains that Islamic feminism tries to reinterpret religious and social practices in order to achieve gender equality (p. 312). It argues that women challenge oppression by questioning patriarchal interpretations and asking for justice. This study mainly focuses on different gender issues like feminism, patriarchy, and resistance against oppressive systems that maintain inequality.

Qamar and Shaheen (2023) talk about marginalization of religious minorities, highlighting social stratification in Pakistan with reference to Hanif’s novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (Qamar & Shaheen, 2023, p. 682). This study analyzes the character of Alice Bhatti who gets tortured leading to her tragic death which shows marriage as a captivity causing women to suffer tragedy instead of getting respect. Despite all the calamities in her life, Alice Bhatti remains steadfast, and rebels against the tyrant patriarchy (p. 684). This approach makes her a symbol feminist resistance. This article, through the character of Alice

Bhatti, presents woman as a fighting figure against the societal discrimination, especially the patriarchal influence on the lives of women and the religious hypocrisy (p. 684). This study navigates the sufferings of doubly oppressed women like Alice Bhatti, who does not only suffer oppression as a woman but also faces troubles being from a low caste or minority.

Bibi et al. (2025) investigate the objectification and fragmentation of women in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Their study argues that female characters are often described not by their complete identities but specific body parts (p. 822). It explains that patriarchal society has reduced women to physical objects which are a source for male pleasure. According to the study, “the body parts of females arouse men” (p. 829). The article highlights that male characters observe women through “sexualized” perspectives and ignore their emotions, intelligence, and individuality (p. 823). Bibi et al. explain that fragmentation is a reflection of sexist attitudes in society where women are valued more for physical attraction than for their humanity (p. 828). The study also notices that Hanif’s narrative exposes how patriarchy controls women through objectification and fear. It further explains that women in Hanif’s fiction resist objectification and oppression in different ways. Alice Bhatti refuses to accept sexual abuse silently and reacts against male violence (p. 835). Hanif’s female characters are not only victims but also resistant individuals who challenge male authority. Their resistance may appear emotional, physical, or psychological, but it acts as a challenge for patriarchal dominance.

Imtiaz’ (*Dawn Images*, 2026, March 19) review of *Rebel English Academy* notices that the novel acts as a warning about repeating social and political cycles in Pakistan. The review claims that Hanif uses satire to criticize authoritarianism, patriarchy, and social injustice. Female characters in the *Rebel English Academy* challenge socially constructed ideas of male domination over women and refuse to become an oppressed being. It is also noticed that women show emotional strength, intelligence, and bravery during adverse conditions. The main focus is on Hanif’s criticism of oppressive male power and women’s resistance against patriarchal control. A recent study by Nawaz and Batool (2026) on *Rebel English Academy* highlights the significance of motherhood as a biological weapon against women in patriarchal, military, and religious systems of 1970s Pakistan (Nawaz & Batool, 2026, p. 1887). They notice how Mother Bano, despite being absent, makes a presence in Sabiha’s composition. They also point out Hanif’s tough and purposive feminism that denies motherhood as a noble position rather presents it as a site of both patriarchal and resistant female agency (p. 1888). This study argues that Hanif sees “motherhood not as a source of sentimental fulfillment, but a condition of greater vulnerability (p. 1898). It is presented as a condition which is shaped by and surrounding the organization of patriarchal exploitation.

Though a number of scholars have discussed women’s marginalization, fragmentation, patriarchy, and resistance in Hanif’s different works, a gap still remains to be explored in *Rebel English Academy*. This article aims at focusing on *Rebel English Academy* to explore the dynamics of patriarchy and female resistance. Previous researchers have discussed oppression, violence, and objectification against women, but there is a lack of focus on how female resistance operates against patriarchal structures. This study investigates how Hanif uses satire, political commentary, and female agency together to challenge patriarchal dominance. The study at hand fills this gap by analyzing patriarchy and female resistance in *Rebel English Academy* through a feminist lens while examining how women struggle for dignity, identity, and freedom within oppressive social structures.

Theoretical Framework

Women as “the Other”

Through the feminist theories of Simone de Beauvoir (1953) and bell hooks (1984), this paper explains how male dominance is achieved through normalizing a system in which women are considered “the others” and biologically dependent on the men. In *The Second Sex* (1953), Beauvoir presents a foundation of feminist criticism of patriarchy, power, education, and sexuality. Beauvoir’s assertion, “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (Beauvoir, 1953, p. 273), builds the idea that femininity is socially constructed rather than biologically defined. She further talks about the socially constructed reality of humanity as a male centered subject, and how a man defines woman not in herself but as a relative to him (p. 15), reducing women to “the Other” (p. 16). These concepts assist Beauvoir to demonstrate men’s position as the norm and that of the women’s as the other within patriarchal society. She talks about the presentation of the world as the work of men (p. 162), which presents male authority shaping ideology, culture, and production of knowledge. She also puts emphasis on men as a necessity for women highlighting women’s socially imposed dependency within patriarchal structures. Beauvoir also focuses on economic and institutional inequality as key factors of oppressive attitude towards women. She states economic privilege is the basis of masculine authority suggesting that material dependence reinforces female subordination (p. 157). Women are considered the subjects to passivity and they are conditioned from the childhood to internalize passivity because girls are conditioned to accept passivity, whereas men are encouraged to become active subjects (p. 362). Women are taught by their mothers from the childhood to please and obey their future husbands emphasizing how education and socialization prepare women for submission rather than autonomy (p. 363). Beauvoir talks about marriage and domesticity as a traditional destiny which is offered to women by the society (p. 425). She comments that patriarchal norms restrict women to domestic and reproductive roles that limit their freedom both intellectually and politically. She also talks about the burden of motherhood which causes women to suffer economic dependency, revealing how social expectations surrounding motherhood support patriarchal control (p. 470). This approach by Beauvoir aligns with hooks’ (1984) argument which states that female freedom is directly related to the education, self-consciousness, and structural change rather than merely achieving individual freedom within a male dominated society.

Redefining Feminist Struggle

Focusing on the concept of “the Other,” this section of theoretical framework moves towards another approach of women struggling in a patriarchal society. bell hooks (1984) in her book, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, investigates feminist perspectives on power, education, and sexual oppression. hooks critiques patriarchal system by redefining feminist struggle as a collective movement against domination (hooks, 1984, p. 3). hooks argues that radical approach in feminism opposed the idea of domination of any human being by another emphasizing that the dominance in human relationships is the target of their opposition (p. 83). She further argues that many feminists failed to differentiate “between power as domination and control over others and power that is creative and life-affirming” (p. 84). hooks also criticizes liberal feminist aims for institutional progress, observing the inability of women to acquire much power on the terms set by social structure without

undermining the struggle to end sexist oppression (p. 84). These ideas establish the foundation of hooks's critique of patriarchy by showing that patriarchal structures reproduce oppression even when women participate in them. She further argues that feminist movements become inefficient when women accept patriarchal definitions of power. She highlights that women are taught from childhood that dominating and controlling others is an expression of power, insisting that women do not conceptualize power differently from the men (p. 85). Moreover, she denies the idea that women are naturally nurturing, explaining that "it simply is not so" (p. 86) that women possess a different moral framework from men. She highlights the significance of resistance by saying that one of the greatest forms of power available to oppressed groups is "the refusal to accept the definition of oneself that is put forward by the powerful" (p. 90). She quotes Janeway's words to name this resistance "the ordered use of the power to disbelieve" (p. 90).

Education: An Important Tool for Female Liberation

hooks (1984) argues that feminist liberation is directly connected with education and literacy. Referring to Charlotte Bunch's arguments, hooks notes that "reading and writing are valuable in and of themselves," (hooks, 1984, p. 107), and she also asserts that literacy makes women able to think and care for themselves to challenge the cultural norms and to conceive of alternatives for society (p. 108). She criticizes feminist movements which rely on academic discourse, considering the written material as a tool which undermines women's approach to learn more about feminism (p. 108). She also argues that "there will be no mass-based feminist movement as long as feminist ideas are understood only by a well-educated few" (p. 112). She portrays education as a revolutionary tool that helps women to challenge patriarchal oppression through self-consciousness and intellectual agency.

Heterosexuality Undermining Sexual Liberation

hooks claims that sexuality is a socially constructed idea, and she seems criticizing heterosexuality. She explains that "sexual liberation" alone failed to dismantle patriarchal sexual relations because it "did not [...] deconstruct the power relations between men and women in the sexual sphere" (p. 147). Drawing on Ellen Willis, hooks argues that "sexual liberation involves not only the abolition of restrictions but the positive presence of social and psychological conditions that foster satisfying sexual relations" (p. 149). hooks further explains that "sexual freedom can exist only when individuals are no longer oppressed by a socially constructed sexuality based on biologically determined definitions of sexuality" (p. 149). She states that feminism should oppose heterosexism because "the struggle to end prejudice, exploitation, and oppression of lesbians and gay men is a crucial feminist agenda" (p. 151).

Discussion and Analysis

Hanif's *Rebel English Academy* takes place in a small fictional town in Pakistan called OK Town following the hanging of Prime Minister Zulifqar Ali Bhutto. Basically, the novel tells the story of Sir Baghi, an English teacher, and Captain Gul, a military officer. However, Hanif constructs a world where women are pushed to the edges, but they refuse to stay silent. The novel presents female characters who suffer male dominance but who find ways to resist it. The nineteen homework essays, written by Sabiha Bano, serve as a powerful narrative device in the novel. These home-works, assigned by Sir Baghi, become Sabiha's own

autobiography, her record of suffering, survival, and retaliation. Through Sabiha's voice, and through other female characters like Noor Nabi, Hanif makes an honest picture of how patriarchy functions in the everyday lives of women, and how women find ways to resist it at any cost. The novel is not simply a political story about Pakistan. It is also a story about gender, power, and the everyday ways in which women are controlled. It also presents OK Town as a world where the military, the mosque, the family, and even well-meaning men like Baghi all participate in controlling women's lives.

Patriarchy Shaping Women's Identity

Before analyzing female resistance in *Rebel English Academy*, it is important to understand the modes of oppression which women are resisting. Hanif portrays OK Town as a space where power belongs to men irrespective of their position in the society. Different men hold different roles but every male character seems to dominate women in a different way. Men hold power no matter whether they are military officers, religious scholars, or simply husbands. Captain Gul represents state's masculine power to use women for the sake of pleasure. He sees women primarily as objects of desire or suspicion. Sir Baghi, though sympathetic, is still a man whose first thought when Sabiha Bano arrives at the academy is to think of how to explain "the presence of a woman at his academy" (Hanif, 2026, p. 103). He thinks more of his own reputation for having a woman at his academy than her safety. It is necessary to understand that patriarchy is not simply about individual men. It is a system that teaches everyone to accept male dominance as normal and natural. In this novel, it is visible in the way women are watched. When Sabiha Bano arrives at Baghi's academy, she is described as "a girl old enough to know that she needs a dupatta but young enough not to know what to do with it" (p. 12). Here, dupatta is a symbol of modesty and piety for a woman in South Asia, especially for Muslim women. It is considered a requirement to be a respectable woman in the society. It is because she should be ready to perform modesty for male gaze. Beauvoir's concept of women as "the Other" (1953) provides a platform to understand women's relation to men in the society. This is what can be seen in OK Town where women exist in relation to men. They are wives, objects of desire, and problems to be managed. The two dominant institutions, the military and the mosque, are entirely male spaces. Captain Gul's world is one of army barracks, bachelor officers' quarters, and intelligence operations. Molly considers mosque as his personal domain. Women are only outsiders in these spaces. Even when A. D. Malang finds a dupatta in academy, he picks it up "with a flourish, sniffs it" (Hanif, 2026, p. 107), treating it as a curious object. This small moment perfectly delivers Beauvoir's idea of a woman turning into an object, and her presence reducing to a scent on a piece of cloth.

Sabiha Bano: An Unsung Warrior in Patriarchal Society

Sabiha Bano, the central female character of the novel *Rebel English Academy*, performs the most complex act of female resistance when she arrives at academy carrying a gun. She arrives as an agent in a society where women are supposed to be passive, modest, and dependent. She reveals herself as someone with a weapon, with a political purpose, and with her own agenda. When Baghi takes gun from Sabiha, Hanif writes: "their hands touched for a moment, and his hand trembled, like it did the first time he held his first true love Mehboob's hand" (Hanif, 2026, p. 63). This shows how a woman, in her greatest political agency, is still being affected by a man's own emotional history. This is what Beauvoir

describes that women are constantly seen through the lens of men's subjectivity. On the other hand, Sabiha remains a symbol of resistance and autonomy against the patriarchal control. She does not let Baghi or anyone else to control her. She is also a victim of state violence, so she carries a gun as an act of grief and resistance. hooks argues that true resistance must acknowledge all the layers of oppression that women face. Feminism is not just about gender, it is also about class, race, and political power. Sabiha Bano is not simply oppressed by men, she is also a victim of state apparatus which has also arrested and tortured her parents. She is left with no family name or protection in a society that values both. She carries the gun not just for herself but for everything the state has taken from her family. Baghi hides Sabiha in the academy and later thinks what to do with her, thinking of "his own redemption" (Hanif, 2026, p. 121). This leads to the idea of helping women not as equals, but from a position of superiority. However, Sabiha doesn't want to be rescued. She moves throughout the story on her own terms. She visits Noor Nabi on her own, carries her own secrets, and makes her own choices; while resisting against the patriarchal norms.

Noor Nabi: A Symbol of Versatile Resistance

While Sabiha shows a dramatic and physical resistance, Noor Nabi represents a different kind of resistance against patriarchal control. Her resistance is in the form of a slow, patient, and exhausting work of building a professional life in a world where it is not given to a woman. She is both a lawyer and a palmist, and she operates her business from an office above the mosque just like Baghi runs an academy above the mosque. She becomes a woman who cannot be handled by men. Baghi calls her "that fraud," despite the fact that she is "a lawyer, of course" (p. 121). Hanif portrays her character as one who is not glamorous, not comfortable, not celebrated when he remarks about her appearance: "brittle, her cheekbones protruding, her black lawyer's coat shiny after excessive pressing, her coat lapels speckled with fine dandruff. Her eyes are like little drill machines that bore straight through you. When she goes on her bazaar round, she doesn't walk so much as glide; shopkeepers step aside, people make way" (p. 155). Despite this kind of appearance, she has presence and power of a kind that cannot be taken away. She helps arrange the legal framework for Sabiha's final act of resistance (p. 311). This leads towards the feminist idea of female freedom which requires a harmony among women to achieve freedom in a patriarchal society. Noor Nabi uses law as her tool to protect another woman and to resist patriarchal structures.

Homework Essays: A Symbol of Feminist Representative Voice

There are multiple symbols which serve as tools of resistance against male constructed norms. Hanif gives his characters their own voice to represent themselves in a way as they are the real figures in the society. Their opinions, emotions, and action present a great overview of the society they live in. The homework essays, written by Sabiha Bano, present how she chooses to use them on her own terms. She announces clearly: "I plan to write this treatise as well as the others about essay topics as they manifest to my humble self. Because when I have tried to bear witness to things as they manifest to men, they turn out to be not very propitious" (p. 39). This announcement makes everything clear to understand that follows. Sabiha has learnt everything through painful experiences. She has come to know that seeing the world through men's eyes leads to her own disappearance. Hanif, through the character of Sabiha Bano, asserts that the act of self-authorization is itself a form of resistance. Sabiha writes everything from her own perspective, in her own voice, on her own

terms. Society places her in a position where she is supposed to be silent, grateful, and manageable because she is a second wife, a woman who has lost her parents, and a fugitive. Instead, she composes nineteen essays about the story of oppression that she has suffered, and names the men who were responsible for her agony in a precise and unflinching manner. Sabiha's use of formal language is quite subversive. She writes using long words and ironic qualification. She describes the men around her in an academic manner. She uses phrases like "my esteemed father" (p. 53) and "my late spouse claimed to love me" (p. 299) that serve as a controlled irony to turn the language of respect into the language of accusation. These essays also show the significance of education for women. Education helps women to raise their voice in a society of male dominance. This action serves as a refusal to be the simple, uneducated woman in a patriarchal society. Her husband mutters that he should "take a simple girl, a peasant girl of no education" (p. 273), showing how men see women's education against their control over women. This leads to the factor that men want women to be ignorant, compliant, and silent.

Marriage as Captivity

Marriage is also portrayed as captivity for women. It gives men authority to control women both physically and mentally. The conversation between Molly and Mrs. Molly portrays a clear image of how men control women even if both follow the same approach. On asking Mrs. Molly to marry a widow, Mrs. Molly says, "would you like me to spread my legs in front of another man?" and Molly furiously replies, "What are you saying woman? Do you have no shame?" (p. 179). This attitude shows gender discrimination in the society revealing how the principle of ethics and morality is also controlled by men and they can decide for women what to say and what not to say. Though Mrs. Molly gets scolded, but she shows resistance in a distinct manner. Sabiha Bano is also a captive of marriage as she is given no real choice in her marriage. She is left with no freedom and protection on the night of her marriage as she states, "with esteemed father and Mother Bano both incarcerated, nay, disappeared from the proverbial face of the earth, I am at strangers' mercy" (p. 226). She describes her spouse with deliberate un-flattery: "a very corpulent man, and has an oily baby face, and speaks also in a childlike lilting voice, and looks into my eyes as if he wants to get inside my soul" (p. 227). Her husband's preliminary act of weeping on the night of marriage forces Sabiha to console him as she states, "I don't think I have any choice so I hold his head to my bosom" (p. 227). It shows how men adopt different strategies to make women obey them and show love to them even though it is unwanted. Sabiha becomes an active agent of resistance when the marriage reaches its most violent moment. When Hakim Wasif Ali Wasif confronts her with a videotape on the morning of Bhutto's hanging, she replies aggressively, "I have never asked you what you do with your first wife, who are you to ask me? On a day like this. What about my father? What about my mother?" (p. 290). She doesn't accept her husband's claim of ownership over her on the day when the country is mourning on Bhutto's hanging and her own family faces state violence. Her husband's response shows how men consider a woman respectable and worthy to be given importance on the basis of her physical appearance when he says, "they be hanged too because of the progeny they gave him, already broken and still unfaithful to her husband who gave her everything that he has" (p. 290). This response shows how men leave no stone unturned to claim control over women even if they have to discuss something which is not supposed to be discussed.

Dupatta as an Object for Male Gaze

One of the most consistent symbols in the novel is the dupatta. It appears multiple times, each time it carries the weight of patriarchal expectation. It is not only a symbol of femininity, but also an object for male gaze. When Sabiha first arrives in the academy, her dupatta is described as “a white dupatta embroidered with white and yellow Nargis flowers loosely draped around her neck, a girl old enough to know that she needs a dupatta but young enough not to know what to do with it” (p. 12). Sabiha keeps her dupatta loose and improperly imbalanced which indicates her refusal to accept the social role it represents. When Baghi finds the dupatta left behind in the academy, he picks it up and smells it: “fading smells of mustard oil and motia, marriage and murder” (p. 116). This action makes dupatta a relic, carrying the story of a woman’s life events including marriage, violence, and survival woven into a fabric. Hanif writes: “a girl old enough to know that she needs a dupatta” (p. 12) showing a social construct which makes it necessary for a woman to wear a dupatta in order to satisfy social code and if someone refuses to do so, she is considered a misfit in the society. The male dominated society wants to see women following the social codes set by patriarchal authorities. Hanif portrays characters like Sabiha Bano show resistance against these established norms. First, she wears dupatta in an improper manner, and then she leaves the dupatta at academy which shows her artful defiance of patriarchal norms. A. D. Malang sniffs the dupatta and questions about the presence of female students in the academy (p. 107), and later Sir Baghi does the same and remembers her first wife. It shows male mentality of locating women’s identity in material things. Both men refer to the women after looking at the dupatta, presenting dupatta as a symbol of femininity according to male perspective. Yet Sabiha’s loose, improperly worn dupatta is itself a form of resistance. It is not a dramatic, conscious protest, but a quite refusal of a young woman to perfectly perform the role which is given to her by the society. hooks calls it “viable resistance” (hooks, 1984, p. 130) which is in the form of small, daily acts through which oppressed people preserve their dignity and selfhood, sustaining the problem of male violence in the society.

Conclusion

This article has evaluated the ideological and philosophical domains of Hanif’s *Rebel English Academy* by aligning its feminist perspective with the idea of key feminist thinkers like Simone de Beauvoir (1953) and bell hooks (1984). This study has demonstrated that Hanif’s fiction rejects male authority and reveals how patriarchal structures define status of women as a controlled being in the society. This study doesn’t only talk about sufferings of women, but also finds way to resist unjust patriarchy. By portraying dress codes, matrimonial lives, and family relationships of characters, Hanif exposes the factors which affect the female agency and make a woman dependent on a man. In nineteen homework essays written by Sabiha Bano, Hanif employs artistic genius which allows a woman to raise her voice without showing physical resistance. This study analyzes importance of education and self-consciousness for women as these are the key tools for women’s agency. *Rebel English Academy* functions as a counter discourse against pre-established patriarchal norms. It counters patriarchy that considers women vulnerable and weak enough to sustain without complete dependence on men. Hanif argues that women, like Sabiha Bano and Noor Nabi, function as prime examples of women being active and independent in the society. Though both men and women share equal part in building a society, women don’t need complete

dependency on men to survive. Hanif presents state as a patriarchal institution where characters like Captain Gul considers women only a source of sexual pleasure and confined to obey men. This study also identifies state violence as another tool of oppression over women. This study analyzes how state apparatus creates troubles for a woman, arresting her parents. It focuses on how Hanif uses artistic language to address patriarchal influence over the lives of women. It reveals that men want to dominate women in every aspect; whether it is religion, educational, or political domain. It argues how men use established principles to manipulate women having their axe to grind. Through feminist lens, this study claims that men consider women as “others,” and to be controlled. They want women to be perpetually submissive to the male authority suggesting that women must be kept uneducated in order to maintain male dominance over them. However, this study aims at encouraging women to acquire all tools of resistance such as self-consciousness, education, and political involvement. Characters like Sabiha Bano, Noor Nabi, and Mrs. Molly show indirect denial to accept male manipulative strategies and pave a way for all women to carry a collective struggle in order to eradicate patriarchal dominance from the society. This study claims if women acquire self-consciousness collectively and not partially, it will definitely help to wipe out gender-based discrimination from society, and only then the society can grow into a prosperous and successful place where everyone is treated equally. A society where everyone shares equals rights and facilities is the only place which offers a dignified and graceful recognition to every person. This study becomes a key to identify unjust treatment of women by men in the society in the present era and discovers ways to offer women strategies to raise their voice in a world where they are supposed to be silent, submissive, and confined. This study also rejects objectification and fragmentation of women on the basis of their religion, class, or status in the society, aiming to terminate their marginalization in society.

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