

**SUBVERSION OF SEXIST STEREOTYPES:
A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF
MUMTAZ SHAHNAWAZ'S *THE HEART
DIVIDED***

BY

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Subversion of Sexist Stereotypes: A Historical Discourse
Analysis of Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided*

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ABSTRACT

Title: Subversion of Sexist Stereotypes: A Historical Discourse Analysis of Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided*

This study examines the defiance of the sexism as it appears in Mumtaz Shahnawaz's postcolonial novel *The Heart Divided*. The study adopts a Discourse Historical Approach (DHA), which represents an exploration of the ways in which Shahnawaz confronts traditional gender roles and attacks the patriarchal structures that deprive women of the opportunity to leave their domestic sphere, in a South Asian context. Two key research questions guide the analysis: firstly, how does the language in the novel shape and propagate the common sexist stereotypes? Secondly, how does Shahnawaz take the man with a turban stereotype and turn it on its head within the story? The study performs an analysis of the language used in the novel, which is the main data source for the study. The text is additionally analyzed due to DHA in order to see how it both creates and negates stereotypes of women. Role of characters, and system of apartheid within the family, like the Zenana (women's quarters) and Mardana (men's quarters) will be the main areas of inquiry. The result of the analysis is that Shahnawaz disrupts stereotypes with powerful female characters who go against society's norms and tackle the patriarchal system. In addition, the language itself topples down the patriarchal discourse. These conclusions show that Shahnawaz uses literature as a medium in which he describes and reevaluates gender roles. Such a study is not limited to the exploration of linguistic means for the reinforcement or challenge of stereotypes but also points to the literature as the main instrument for social change. Future research will be able to investigate similar issues in other post-colonial works or explore the historical background of the creation of the novel to understand why Shahnawaz wrote *The Heart Divided* and what the impact of the novel was in its specific social-cultural environment.

Keywords: *Gender Study, Feminism, Subversion, Post-Colonial*

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my loving husband, whose constant support, patience and encouragement have been my anchor throughout this journey, and to my precious newborn daughter, whose presence fills my heart with boundless love and hope. Your love inspires my every step and this work is lovingly dedicated to both of you.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Gender is a system of meaning; a way of dividing people into categories based on anatomical differences and then allotting specific roles to each category. Language is a major element in maintaining stereotypical roles allotted to men and women and also for perpetuating hegemony of one gender over the other. Women, since ages have been treated as second class citizens within civilizations (Markov, 2000). Patriarchal social norms always perpetuated the submissive and self-effacing roles specified for women, making men confident and assertive, and granting them a more powerful position socially and economically.

Sexist language is not harmless or innocent; it helps reinforce the power imbalances that exist within societies by perpetuating gender stereotypes. These stereotypes persist through various forms of communication and continue to influence both perceptions and behaviors in ways that constrain individuals, particularly women. Linguists, gender theorists, and critical discourse analysts have increasingly turned their attention to how language not only reflects but also reinforces social inequalities. Sexist stereotypes have been deeply embedded in societal discourse for centuries, influencing the ways in which gender roles are perceived and enacted. These stereotypes, perpetuated through various forms of communication, have contributed to the maintenance of gender inequalities. The persistence of sexist stereotypes in societal discourse has long contributed to the reinforcement of gender inequalities, shaping perceptions and behaviors in ways that constrain both women and men. These stereotypes are not merely remnants of past ideologies but are continuously reproduced and recontextualized within contemporary communication, thereby sustaining a status quo that marginalizes women.

The role language plays in reinforcing social inequality between men and women has been widely studied. Despite the growing body of literature on the relationship between language and gender, there remains a gap in understanding how discourse can be strategically used to subvert rather than reinforce sexist stereotypes. While previous studies have extensively documented the presence and effects of these stereotypes in various

contexts, less attention has been paid to the ways in which discourse can challenge and transform them, particularly through a historical and contextual lens. By focusing on how language is used to challenge and undermine traditional gender roles, this study seeks to uncover the mechanisms through which discourse can be a powerful tool for social change. The DHA, with its emphasis on contextualizing discourse within its socio-historical backdrop, provides a robust framework for analyzing how sexist stereotypes are not only perpetuated but also contested. Through this approach, the paper analyzed specific instances where discourse acts as a site of struggle, offering insights into the ways in which language can be both a vessel for oppression and a means of resistance.

Critical discourse analysts interest lies in those texts that support the beliefs of acceptance of imbalanced measures of power as unavoidable and natural, probably even as accurate and good. Discourse Historical Approach emerged from Critical Discourse Analysis which stated that interpretation of written and spoken text which intakes all of the previously available data to integrate them systematically (Wodak, 2015). On the lives of human beings discourse not only has symbolic but as well as a material effect. One of the most specific concern of DHA is some institutions because of their unbalanced power to construct and circulate discourse and also for the reason that they endorse governing interests over politically marginalized group like women, lower classes, and ethnic minorities.

This study aims to address this gap by employing the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to analyze how sexist stereotypes are subverted within selected texts. The DHA allows for a nuanced understanding of how discourse functions within its socio-historical context, providing insights into the mechanisms through which language can both perpetuate and resist oppressive gender norms. By focusing on instances of subversion within discourse, this research contributes to the broader topic of gender inequality and the potential of transformative language. This study is particularly relevant in today's global context, where feminist movements have gained momentum, yet the struggle against ingrained gender biases continues. By investigating how sexist stereotypes are subverted within discourse, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the intersection between language, power, and gender, ultimately highlighting the potential for discourse to enact social transformation.

1.1 Introduction to the Writer

This study will seek to trace subversion of sexist stereotypes in popular literature through a Discourse Historical Approach by considering the case study of Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's postcolonial novel *The Heart Divided*. Mumtaz Shah Nawaz was born in Lahore on 14 October 1912. She was a political activist. She was also concerned with the rights of the women. Mumtaz Shahnawaz (1912-1948) occupies a unique position in South Asian literature as one of the earliest female novelists to capture the complex interplay of gender, politics, and society during a pivotal moment in the subcontinent's history. Born into a prominent political family, Shahnawaz was not only a writer but also an active participant in the struggle for independence, making her work deeply intertwined with the sociopolitical realities of her time.

Her seminal novel, *The Heart Divided*, is particularly noteworthy for its portrayal of the personal and political dilemmas faced by women in pre-Partition India. Shahnawaz's narrative offers a rich exploration of the intersection between gender and national identity, presenting characters who navigate the tensions between traditional roles and emerging feminist consciousness. Through her portrayal of these struggles, Shahnawaz provides a critique of the patriarchal structures that dominated both private and public spheres, making her work a valuable text for examining the subversion of sexist stereotypes.

Despite her early death, Mumtaz Shahnawaz left behind a legacy that continues to resonate in feminist literary studies. Her work serves as an important lens through which to explore how discourse can challenge entrenched gender norms, making her an essential figure in any study of gender and literature in the South Asian context.

The novel, *The Heart Divided*, touches upon the factors and the circumstances which led to the Partition of the subcontinent and the creation of Pakistan. The novel was published after her death in 1948. Because of the immense significance of the Partition for the people of sub-continent, she responded to the Partition, touching upon the multiple issues surrounding the Partition and the impact of colonization upon local culture.

1.2 Synoptic Outline

The story revolves around three female characters Zohra, Sughra (the siblings) and a Hindu girl Mohni. The domestic space in Muslim household is divided into Zenana (the space specified for women) and Mardana (the space for men). Muslim women cannot cross this border line in the practice of daily life. And if ever, they go out, they have to veil their faces. My argument is that through the removal of the veil, Shah Nawaz explores the possibility of the participation of Muslim women in the public sphere. The trope of marriage serves as the site of contestation between the traditional Muslim patriarchal demands and the feminine desire to subvert it. Sughra, in the beginning of the novel, cherishes the ideals of a traditional muslim woman who finds fulfillment through marriage. But the experience of a loveless marriage changes her views regarding the traditional sexist roles in Muslim family structure. As an estranged wife, she finds refuge in the political struggle of the Muslim League. Zohra also refuses to accept the proposal of an arranged marriage. The veil is lifted both in the literal and metaphorical sense. Both the sisters are agreed to resist the patriarchal demands of conformity and decide to participate in the public sphere. Thus, the lifting of veil becomes symbolic of feminist resistance against patriarchal oppression which insists on confining women only to the private sphere of their lives.

1.3 Problem Statement

Despite the growing body of feminist literary criticism, early South Asian English literature written by women remains under-examined, particularly in terms of how it challenges patriarchal gender norms. Most existing scholarship tends to focus on how literature reinforces gender stereotypes, often overlooking the ways in which female authors resist and subvert these dominant ideologies. As a result, there is a significant gap in understanding the discursive mechanisms through which early female South Asian writers articulated female agency and alternative gender identities.

Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided* is a pioneering work that provides a rich site for exploring these dynamics. Set against the backdrop of pre-Partition India, the novel presents female characters who do not passively conform to societal expectations but actively negotiate, resist, and reshape their roles within a patriarchal society. However, the

strategies the novel employs to subvert sexist stereotypes—particularly through language, characterization, and narrative voice—have not received adequate scholarly attention.

This research addresses this critical gap by analyzing how *The Heart Divided* uses discourse to challenge patriarchal ideologies and construct empowered representations of womanhood. By applying the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), the study aims to uncover the textual strategies that enable this subversion and contribute to broader conversations on gender, power, and voice in early South Asian English literature.

1.4 Thesis Statement

This research involves the investigation of stereotypical identity of women in *The Heart Divided* in the light of Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach and Lazar's Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. *Heart Divided* by Mumtaz Shahnawaz is a novel that challenges and subverts the sexist stereotypes present in the South Asian cultural context. In this thesis, a discourse-historical analysis of the novel's language use is employed to explore how Shahnawaz challenges and subverts these sexist stereotypes. Through the examination of language use in the novel, this thesis demonstrates that Shahnawaz challenges traditional sexist roles and subverts patriarchal notions of women's identity and agency. The thesis analyzes the language use in the novel to explore how the author challenges and subverts sexist stereotypes. This analysis is guided by a research question: How does *The Heart Divided* by Mumtaz Shahnawaz reflect and subvert sexist stereotypes through its language and narrative, particularly in the portrayal of female agency within a patriarchal and politically charged South Asian context?

By answering this question, the thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of how Shahnawaz subverts sexist stereotypes through her language use, and how this subversion challenges and transforms traditional sexist roles in the South Asian context. Through this analysis, the thesis shows that Shahnawaz's language use challenges and subverts sexist stereotypes in several ways, including through the portrayal of strong female characters who challenge the patriarchal order, the representation of male characters who defy stereotypical notions of masculinity, and the use of language to undermine the patriarchal discourse. The thesis also explores the social and historical context in which the novel was

written, and how this context informs the language use in the novel. In conclusion, this thesis demonstrates that *Heart Divided* is a powerful example of a literary work that challenges and subverts sexist stereotypes through language use. By analyzing the novel's language use and context, this thesis provides a nuanced understanding of how Shahnawaz's language use contributes to the subversion of patriarchal sexist roles and offers a vision of a more equitable society.

1.5 Research Question

1. How does *The Heart Divided* by Mumtaz Shahnawaz reflect and subvert sexist stereotypes through its language and narrative, particularly in the portrayal of female agency within a patriarchal and politically charged South Asian context?

1.6 Significance and Rationale of the Study

This study will seek to explore the construction and subversion of sexist stereotypes in Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's novel *The Heart Divided* through its analysis with the lens of Discourse Historic Approach. The proposed study will seek to elucidate that sexist-specific (so-called) traits, especially of women, are more of stereotypical constructions rather than natural characteristics. Moreover, it will explore how the female characters criticized the stereotypical notions and how the restrictions imposed upon female sexist, as symbolized in *The Heart Divided* through the *Zanana* and *Mardana* sections of the house, are based on stereotypical assumption in the patriarchal society that female members are hierarchical others. In this way, the study will make ample contribution to understanding the representation of women in *The Heart Divided*.

1.7 Delimitation of the Research

The proposed study will be a focused study of how sexist stereotypes (of women) are subverted in *The Heart Divided* using Discourse Historic Approach by Wodak. The study will remain very specific to the end and will not overlap any other area of inquiry.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous chapter, we embarked on an investigative journey through the complex narrative of Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided*. The analysis emphasised the deeply ingrained sexist stereotypes that permeate the social structure, as portrayed in the novel. The first chapter sheds light on the systematic perpetuation of gender roles within the South Asian cultural milieu by carefully analysing the characters and their interactions. As (Jajja, 2012) accurately points out, we witnessed how the novel goes beyond simple storytelling to serve as a thoughtful reflection of the socio-political turmoil and gender dynamics of its era (Jajja, 2012).

The first chapter also emphasised the intricate relationship that exists between cultural expectations and gender identity. This was especially clear when analysing Zenana and Mardana's domestic spaces, which represent the gendered divide that Shahnawaz skillfully negotiates in her story (Karki, 2010). Expanding upon these fundamental understandings, the objective of Chapter 2 is to construct a strong theoretical framework that will serve as a compass for the following examination of *The Heart Divided*. This chapter presents and expands upon the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA), which is an essential component of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and offers indispensable instruments for analysing and comprehending the intricate portrayal of gendered identities in works of literature. DHA is especially skilled at delving into the complexities of meaning in texts through its ability to contextualise them within their historical and sociopolitical environments. This facilitates a deeper comprehension of the power dynamics and ideologies that are fundamental to the texts (Wodak, 2015). The objective here is to harness the analytical prowess of DHA to delve deeper into Shahnawaz's portrayal of women, their struggles, and resistances against the patriarchal structures that seek to confine them. This chapter, therefore, serves as a bridge between the initial thematic explorations of Chapter 1 and the more focused, theory-driven analysis that follows.

The theme of subverting sexist stereotypes has emerged as a powerful strand in Pakistani literature, especially in works authored by women who interrogate traditional

gender roles within the sociopolitical and cultural fabric of the region. These literary efforts not only challenge patriarchal norms but also contribute to a growing feminist discourse in South Asia. In this context, Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided* (1957) holds historical and ideological significance as one of the earliest English novels by a Pakistani woman writer, presenting female voices in the backdrop of nationalist politics.

Mumtaz Shahnawaz, through the character of Zohra, depicts a woman who resists the traditional roles expected of her in both familial and national contexts. Rather than passively accepting the patriarchal values of her society, Zohra actively participates in political debates, pursues education, and articulates her own moral and ideological choices. Scholars such as (Ahmad, 2004) and (Yaqin, 2013) have emphasized the importance of reclaiming such texts, arguing that early Pakistani women writers often embedded feminist consciousness within nationalist frameworks, using their narratives to expose the contradictions between women's rights and political freedom.

A comparable subversive voice can be found in Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* (1983), which explores the life of a young orphan girl forced into a tribal marriage. The protagonist's eventual escape from violence and repression becomes a metaphor for female resistance against both cultural oppression and institutionalized patriarchy. Sidhwa, like Shahnawaz, uses fiction to critique the gendered structures of society. Scholars such as Fawzia Afzal-Khan have noted how Sidhwa's work deconstructs the myth of the obedient, sacrificial woman, revealing the violence that underlies so-called traditional values.

Similarly, Uzma Aslam Khan's *Trespassing* (2003) and Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography* (2002) present educated, urban female protagonists who confront societal expectations, question imposed silences, and assert their agency through both voice and action. These novels emphasize women's intellectual and emotional autonomy while exposing the social mechanisms that attempt to control and limit them. The narrative strategies employed by these writers interior monologues, dialogic confrontations, and ideological dissent mirror those in *The Heart Divided*, highlighting a literary tradition of resistance that continues across generations.

From a critical perspective, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), as

introduced by Michelle M. Lazar, and Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), offer tools to deconstruct how such texts articulate gendered power relations. In Pakistan, scholars such as (Aslam, 2012) have employed discourse analysis to reveal how media and literature frame female identities in restrictive ways, while also pointing to sites of resistance and redefinition. Applying such frameworks to *The Heart Divided* and other Pakistani novels reveals that subversion is not merely thematic it is enacted through linguistic strategies that challenge traditional representations of femininity.

Moreover, contemporary Pakistani short story writers like Farzana Bari and Zakia Mashhadi have used realist fiction to depict women who transgress cultural expectations, confronting domestic violence, forced marriages, and sexual repression. These stories often end without resolution, reflecting the ongoing nature of women's resistance in a conservative society, yet their very act of speaking is a disruption of silence and submission.

In conclusion, Pakistani literature especially by women demonstrates a persistent effort to subvert sexist stereotypes by reimagining female subjectivity, voice, and power. From *The Heart Divided* to modern narratives, writers have used fiction not only to portray the constraints faced by women, but also to challenge and redefine gender roles through discourse, narrative form, and character construction. This body of literature provides a rich context for analyzing how Mumtaz Shahnawaz's work participates in and pioneers the tradition of feminist resistance in Pakistani English fiction.

The current body of literature on Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* primarily centres around its historical and cultural backdrop, feminist interpretations, and postcolonial approaches. Research conducted by (Jajja, 2012) explores how the narrative of the Partition of India and Pakistan reflects the socio-political turmoil of that time. The study specifically focuses on the effects of these events on women (Jajja, 2012). Feminist analyses, as observed in the writings of (Rafique Ahmed Memon, 2020), provide a critical examination of how Nawaz questions established gender roles, with a specific emphasis on women's defiance of patriarchal norms within the household (Rafique Ahmed Memon, 2020). (Karki, 2010) research exemplifies postcolonial analysis, which delves into the themes of identity, nationalism, and the consequences of colonialism. It sheds light on how

the characters navigate their identities in the midst of the political upheaval caused by Partition (Karki, 2010).

Nevertheless, a significant deficiency in the academic literature pertains to the insufficient examination of the ways in which the language employed in *The Heart Divided* either reinforces or challenges sexist stereotypes. This void offers a singular opportunity to conduct a more comprehensive examination of the linguistic components of the novel using the Discourse-Historical Approach as a framework. Furthermore, although previous research provides valuable perspectives, it frequently examines feminist and postcolonial issues in isolation. By adopting an integrated framework that explores the interplay between gender, culture, and postcolonial identity, a more comprehensive comprehension of the novel's intricate themes and narrative could be attained.

Furthermore, much of the scholarship has concentrated on the novel's historical context. Extending these discussions to consider the themes of Nawaz's themes' contemporary relevance, particularly in light of ongoing debates about gender roles and identity in South Asian societies, could be particularly insightful. A comparison of *The Heart Divided* with other contemporary works dealing with similar themes could also shed light on how Nawaz treats gender and national identity in comparison to her contemporaries.

Various analytical perspectives have been used in the scholarly discourse surrounding Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided*, each of which provides unique insights into the novel's complex thematic and narrative elements. A major component of this conversation is postcolonial analysis, with academics like (Karki, 2010) analysing how the book negotiates nationalism, identity, and the long-lasting effects of colonialism. This viewpoint is essential to comprehending the characters' identity struggles during the political turmoil of the Partition (Karki, 2010). In their study, (Rafique Ahmed Memon, 2020) delve into feminist readings, offering a valuable perspective that highlights the novel's critique of conventional gender roles. Nawaz's interpretations emphasise the depiction of women challenging patriarchal norms, specifically within the domestic realm, as they strive for independence (Rafique Ahmed Memon, 2020). The feminist analyses highlight the novel's significance in the wider conversation about gender equality and the

empowerment of women.

An important aspect of studying the novel is understanding its historical context. In their study, (Jajja, 2012) analyses the novel *The Heart Divided* and its connection to the socio-political climate during the Partition of India and Pakistan. The research sheds light on the profound effects of these historical events on women's lives and the wider social dynamics (Jajja, 2012). This method enhances the comprehension of the novel by placing its narrative within the precise historical moments it depicts. Although these perspectives offer extensive insights, there is still a requirement for a more cohesive approach that combines these varied analytical methods. An analysis of discourse that combines feminist and postcolonial viewpoints could provide a comprehensive comprehension of how Nawaz employs language to both mirror and contest the dominant sexist and colonial ideologies. Furthermore, the current scholarship predominantly centres on the storytelling and thematic aspects, allowing for further investigation into the novel's stylistic and linguistic characteristics in conveying its messages. Through a rigorous analysis of the language and style employed in *The Heart Divided*, my research seeks to enhance our comprehension of how Nawaz's novel serves as a vehicle for social critique and transformation.

Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* pertain primarily to the novel's portrayal of gender roles, postcolonial identity, and the socio-political milieu of the Partition. An important discovery, emphasised in the feminist analyses conducted by (Rafique Ahmed Memon, 2020), pertains to the novel's depiction of strong-willed female characters who actively oppose and contest patriarchal conventions. The resistance in question represents a more extensive societal critique of gendered expectations in the South Asian context, extending beyond an individual's personal rebellion (Rafique Ahmed Memon, 2020).

Scholars such as (Karki, 2010) emphasise the novel's exploration of identity and nationalism from a postcolonial perspective. Nawaz expertly navigates the complexities of identity during the turbulent period of Partition, revealing the deep-seated impacts of colonialism on individual and collective identities (Karki, 2010). This intertwining of personal and political narratives has been a key point of emphasis, highlighting Nawaz's nuanced approach to depicting historical events.

The historical context of the Partition, as explored by (Jajja, 2012), is another

central theme in the existing literature. The novel is recognized for its authentic depiction of the socio-political upheaval during this period, particularly its impact on women. Jajja notes that Nawaz's narrative provides a poignant insight into how the Partition affected women's lives, both in public and private spheres (Jajja, 2012). Scholarly disagreements and arguments primarily centre on how the book depicts postcolonial identity and feminist resistance. Although some academics praise the book for its progressive depiction of women, others contend that it does not completely challenge the patriarchal system because it adheres to some traditional norms. Similarly, there is disagreement over whether the novel sufficiently tackles the complexities of identity or if, in the context of the larger political narrative, it oversimplifies these issues in terms of postcolonial interpretation.

The significance of these findings to my research is rooted in the examination of the linguistic and stylistic aspects of the novel. Previous studies have offered valuable insights into the thematic aspects of the novel. However, further examination is necessary to understand how Nawaz utilizes language to effectively convey and reinforce these themes. I intend to address the gap by conducting an in-depth discourse analysis, specifically examining how the language used in the novel both supports and questions the prevailing patriarchal and postcolonial narrative frameworks. This approach will offer a more profound comprehension of the novel's subversive influence, not only through its content but also through its structure.

The existing literature on Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* seems to have some noticeable gaps and areas that haven't been thoroughly explored. It would be interesting to see further scholarly attention given to these aspects. One noticeable flaw is the lack of attention given to the linguistic and stylistic analysis of the text. Although previous studies by (Rafique Ahmed Memon, 2020) and (Karki, 2010) offer valuable insights into the novel's thematic and narrative dimensions from feminist and postcolonial perspectives, they do not delve deeply into the ways in which Nawaz's language and narrative style contribute to these themes (Rafique Ahmed Memon, 2020) (Karki, 2010). In addition, it is evident that there is a clear absence of interdisciplinary approaches that integrate literary analysis and linguistic scrutiny. The novel's meticulous incorporation of historical context, as highlighted by (Jajja, 2012), and its nuanced exploration of gender roles and identities, necessitate an analytical approach that goes beyond traditional thematic

analysis (Jajja, 2012). Embracing an interdisciplinary approach is essential to truly grasp the profound impact of Nawaz's linguistic choices on the novel's thematic concerns.

Additionally, the literature reveals a gap in the comparative analysis of *The Heart Divided* with other contemporary works addressing similar themes of gender, identity, and postcolonialism. Such a comparative analysis could provide a broader understanding of the novel's place within the literary tradition of its time and the larger discourse on these themes. In order to bridge these gaps, my study suggests a comprehensive discourse analysis of *The Heart Divided*, with a particular emphasis on Nawaz's utilization of linguistic techniques to express and question prevailing patriarchal and colonial narratives. This analysis will go beyond thematic interpretation to explore the novel's use of language, narrative techniques, and stylistic choices. Through the integration of literary and linguistic analysis, my research seeks to offer a deeper understanding of how Nawaz's writing style enhances the novel's impact as a means of social critique and a narrative of resistance.

In addition, my study will involve a thorough comparison with other contemporary literary works that address similar themes. The comparative approach used in this analysis places *The Heart Divided* in a wider literary context, shedding light on Nawaz's distinct contributions to the discussion on gender and postcolonial identity. This comprehensive analysis aims to enhance the current body of scholarship on *The Heart Divided* and provide a deeper understanding of Nawaz's literary talent and its influence on social and cultural narratives.

Many theoretical frameworks have been used to study the subversion of sexist stereotypes in literature; these frameworks are primarily found in feminist theory, gender studies, and critical discourse analysis. These frameworks offer a comprehensive understanding of how gender norms can be both reflected in and challenged by literature. With its various approaches, feminist theory has been useful in analysing how sexist stereotypes are both perpetuated and subverted in literary texts. (Butler, 1990), for example, emphasised the performative nature of gender, arguing that gender roles are socially constructed and subject to change and resistance (Butler, 1990). This viewpoint is critical for comprehending how literature can challenge traditional gender roles and provide alternative representations of femininity and masculinity.

This analysis is expanded upon by gender studies, which look at the larger cultural and social contexts that influence how people perceive gender. Scholars in this field, including (Lazar, 2000), have investigated how language in literature perpetuates sexist stereotypes by reflecting and reinforcing gender norms in society (Lazar, 2000). This method emphasises how literature can either support or contradict gender norms in society. The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) formulated by (Wodak, 2015) presents critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a methodological framework to explore the ways in which language is employed in literature to shape, challenge, and undermine gender ideologies (Wodak, 2015). CDA explores how power dynamics and social inequalities are expressed and challenged through language, making it a valuable approach for examining the undermining of gender stereotypes in texts.

Although various literary texts have been analysed using these frameworks, there is a lack of application to specific novels such as Nawaz's *The Heart Divided*. Most existing studies have focused on thematic and narrative analysis, with less attention given to how language and discourse strategies within the novel serve to subvert sexist stereotypes. I aim to address this gap in my study by utilising the principles of CDA, specifically focusing on the DHA, to analyse *The Heart Divided*. In my analysis, I aim to explore how Nawaz employs various linguistic strategies and narrative techniques to question and reshape conventional gender roles and stereotypes. This approach will not only enhance the comprehension of Nawaz's novel, but also broaden the utilisation of CDA in literary analysis, specifically in the realm of South Asian literature.

Significant studies have utilised diverse methodologies to examine the undermining of sexist stereotypes in literature and media. These studies have produced valuable conclusions that enhance our comprehension of gender representation. A prominent study conducted by (Craig McGarty, 2002) examines the role of stereotypes in group dynamics and their impact on individual behaviour. They take a social psychological approach, focusing on shared beliefs and how they affect group identities. Their research suggests that stereotypes, despite being frequently negative or oversimplified, have a significant impact on shaping how people perceive and interact with each other (Craig McGarty, 2002). (Blum, 2004) makes another important addition when he defines stereotypes as deceptive generalisations that are unaffected by contradicting information. Blum's work

explores the ethical ramifications of stereotyping, especially in light of how it warps our perceptions of both individual and group identities. It is based on philosophical inquiry. His research emphasises how intricate and enduring stereotypes are in forming public opinion (Blum). Feminist literary criticism has witnessed scholarly investigations into the ways in which gender discourse in literature either reinforces or contests established societal conventions (Lazar, *Gender, discourse and semiotics: The politics of parenthood representations*, 2000). Lazar utilises a discourse-analytic methodology to uncover underlying gender ideologies in literary texts through a close examination of the language employed. The aforementioned approach underscores the capacity of language to undermine and reinforce sexist prejudices (Lazar, *Gender, discourse and semiotics: The politics of parenthood representations*, 2000).

Although comprehensive, these studies frequently focus on the broader societal implications of sexist stereotypes, leaving a gap in the specific analysis of their subversion in individual literary works, such as Nawaz's *The Heart Divided*. My research seeks to fill this void by employing a discourse-historical approach, as articulated by (Wodak, 2015), to examine how language is used in Nawaz's novel to subvert traditional gender roles. This method will allow for a thorough examination of the linguistic strategies and narrative devices employed by Nawaz to challenge and redefine sexist stereotypes within the novel's specific cultural and historical context. By focusing on *The Heart Divided*, my research will add to the larger conversation about gender representation in literature, providing new insights into how individual literary works can actively participate in the subversion of entrenched societal norms. The studies on the subversion of sexist stereotypes offer a clever framework for analysing Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided*. The social psychological perspective of (Craig McGarty, 2002) highlights the impact of group dynamics and shared beliefs on individual behaviour. This perspective can be used to analyse the societal constraints and expectations experienced by the female characters in Nawaz's novel. This approach allows for a clever examination of how these characters cleverly navigate and cleverly challenge the collective narratives and stereotypes imposed upon them, thus cleverly offering a deeper understanding of their resistance and agency within the narrative (Craig McGarty, 2002).

(Blum, 2004) philosophical exploration of stereotypes as resistant generalizations

that influence the perception of individual and group identities can be particularly insightful for *The Heart Divided*. This perspective aids in analyzing how Nawaz constructs her characters in ways that challenge conventional stereotypes about women in the South Asian context, particularly in relation to their roles in family and society (Blum). The discourse-analytic approach developed by (Lazar, Gender, discourse and semiotics: The politics of parenthood representations, 2000) can be effectively applied to *The Heart Divided* in order to uncover the underlying gender ideologies embedded within the language used in the literature. Through this approach, we can delve into Nawaz's utilisation of language and narrative techniques to either uphold or challenge conventional gender roles. This methodology allows for a detailed examination of the text, with a specific focus on the impact of linguistic choices on the novel's themes of gender and power dynamics (Lazar, Gender, discourse and semiotics: The politics of parenthood representations, 2000). These studies offer a comprehensive framework for analysing *The Heart Divided* from multiple perspectives. The novel has been extensively analysed in terms of themes and storytelling techniques. However, by applying these theoretical frameworks, we can conduct a more thorough examination of how Nawaz confronts and undermines sexist stereotypes through both the content and structure of the novel. My research focuses on using a discourse-historical analysis to further investigate how Nawaz's narrative choices and language usage contribute to challenging traditional gender roles. This approach will augment our comprehension of the novel, not only as a literary artefact, but also as a medium for social commentary and transformation. It will reflect and question the dominant gender norms of its era.

The studies examining the subversion of sexist stereotypes, while insightful, are not without critiques and limitations. One notable critique is the potential oversimplification inherent in social psychological approaches, such as the one employed by (Craig McGarty, 2002). While their focus on group dynamics and shared beliefs is valuable, this perspective can sometimes overlook the complexity and nuances of individual experiences and identities within these groups. This limitation is particularly relevant when applying their findings to literature, where character development and individual agency play a critical role. While providing a thorough ethical investigation, (Blum, 2004) philosophical analysis of stereotypes might not be particularly applicable to literary analysis. His methodology

favours theoretical discussions over detailed textual analysis, which may limit its applicability when analysing particular literary works like *The Heart Divided*. This disparity emphasises the need for a more comprehensive strategy that fuses in-depth textual analysis with philosophical insights. Although (Lazar, Gender, discourse and semiotics: The politics of parenthood representations, 2000) discourse-analytic technique is useful for finding underlying gender beliefs in text, it has been criticised for relying too heavily on linguistic analysis, potentially disregarding broader socio-cultural and historical circumstances. In the case of *The Heart Divided*, this could mean missing out on the rich historical context against which Nawaz's story unfolds. Given these criticisms and constraints, the objective of my research is to implement a more holistic and all-encompassing methodology. Through an in-depth discourse-historical analysis and the application of philosophical and social psychological insights, my objective is to examine the intricate relationship between the development of individual characters and the establishment of societal norms as depicted in *The Heart Divided*. This method will enable a nuanced analysis that takes into account the text's sociocultural and historical contexts in addition to its linguistic subtleties. Furthermore, through an examination of the constraints identified in the current body of literature, my research endeavours to offer a more comprehensive comprehension of the manner in which Nawaz's novel confronts and undermines misogynistic preconceptions; thus, I contribute novel perspectives to the domain of literary analysis.

The integration of the two parts of the literature review – studies on Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* and general studies on the subversion of sexist stereotypes – reveals a rich interplay between specific literary analysis and broader theoretical frameworks. The insights from feminist theory, gender studies, and critical discourse analysis in the general studies provide a robust theoretical underpinning that can be applied to the nuanced reading of *The Heart Divided*.

The feminist and gender studies viewpoints, particularly those that highlight the performative aspect of gender as outlined by (Butler, 1990), shed light on how Nawaz's characters defy conventional gender norms. These theoretical insights facilitate comprehension of how the novel depicts female characters, not merely as passive conformers to societal norms, but as proactive individuals who actively challenge and

undermine these norms. This is consistent with the results of the specific studies conducted on *The Heart Divided*, which emphasise the novel's critical position on conventional gender norms within the South Asian context. In addition, the critical discourse analysis approach, particularly the Discourse-Historical Approach as articulated by (Wodak, 2015), offers a methodological lens to examine the language and narrative style of Nawaz's novel. This approach is highly relevant in examining how the novel utilises language techniques to subvert and question sexist stereotypes. The analysis presented in the specific studies on *The Heart Divided* is enhanced by a thorough examination of its linguistic aspects, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of the novel's subversive power. The combination of these two elements highlights the significance of taking a comprehensive approach when analysing literature. Through a comprehensive examination of both general studies on the subversion of sexist stereotypes and a specific literary analysis of *The Heart Divided*, my research seeks to offer a detailed understanding of how Nawaz's novel contributes to the larger conversation surrounding gender and power. This comprehensive approach will not only enhance the comprehension of Nawaz's narrative strategies but also make a valuable contribution to the wider field of literary studies by showcasing how individual works can both mirror and question established societal standards.

A fundamental structure for constructing my argument is established through the literature review pertaining to Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* and the broader research on the subversion of sexist stereotypes. By utilising critical discourse analysis, feminist theory, and gender studies, this examination of *The Heart Divided* aims to augment the current corpus of knowledge by illuminating the crucial role that Nawaz's narrative technique and language employment play in subverting and challenging sexist stereotypes.

To begin, my analysis relies heavily on feminist theoretical perspectives, particularly ideas about gender performativity and resistance to patriarchal norms. I hope to demonstrate how Nawaz's portrayal of female characters transcends conventional representations by closely examining the character development and interpersonal dynamics in *The Heart Divided*, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of her work within feminist literary discourse. Secondly, a thorough examination of the linguistic components of Nawaz's text will be possible through the integration of the methodological

insights of critical discourse analysis, specifically the Discourse-Historical Approach. This approach will offer a new perspective on how Nawaz subverts language through language use, in addition to complementing the current thematic analyses of the novel. My research will demonstrate how Nawaz's language challenges gender norms and stereotypes by examining linguistic nuances, narrative structures, and stylistic decisions. Furthermore, my research will address the gaps identified in the existing literature, particularly the need for a more integrated approach that combines thematic and linguistic analysis. This will allow for a more holistic understanding of *The Heart Divided* not just as a feminist and postcolonial narrative, but also as a work that utilizes language and narrative style to challenge societal norms.

To summarise this literature review, the main findings extracted from the studies on Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* and the broader research on undermining sexist stereotypes offer a complex context for my upcoming analysis. The review emphasises the role of feminist theory, gender studies, and critical discourse analysis in comprehending the depiction and undermining of sexist stereotypes in literature. More precisely, it has emphasised the novel's exploration of gender roles and identity in the context of the socio-political upheaval of the Partition. It also highlights the importance of a thorough analysis of Nawaz's narrative in terms of language and style. The significance of this review in providing context for the evaluation of *The Heart Divided* is of the utmost. The analysis has shed light on the multifaceted aspects that contribute to the comprehension of Nawaz's work, with a specific focus on the deficiencies in present-day academic knowledge concerning the novel's linguistic intricacies and narrative strategies. A thorough understanding of this foundation is essential in order to fully comprehend the intricacies of the novel and to place it in the wider context of feminist and postcolonial literature.

Anticipating the future, this literature review establishes the foundation for my research and analysis in the following chapters. The theoretical and methodological framework required for a thorough discourse-historical analysis of *The Heart Divided* is provided. My research will expand upon the knowledge acquired from the review, specifically examining how Nawaz employs language and narrative structure to question and undermine conventional gender roles and stereotypes. My study seeks to provide a fresh viewpoint on Nawaz's work by integrating thematic and linguistic analysis. This will

enhance the discussion on gender representation in literature and other related fields. This methodology not only guarantees a more profound understanding of *The Heart Divided* but also sheds light on the wider significance of literary works in the ongoing discourse surrounding gender and societal standards.

Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided* (1957) has been studied by various scholars over the years, primarily through the lenses of postcolonial nationalism, partition studies, and female identity in relation to the Muslim political struggle. Much of the existing scholarship centers on the novel's depiction of the 1947 Partition, Muslim-Hindu relations, and the evolution of Pakistani nationalism. These studies often highlight the significance of the novel as a historical document authored by a politically active woman, but tend to place more emphasis on the collective political narrative than on the individual gendered experience.

For example, scholars like Amina Yaqin and C. Christine Fair have appreciated the novel for its unique portrayal of Muslim women's participation in the nationalist movement. Their work discusses how characters like Zohra symbolize the educated Muslim woman navigating reformist ideologies, but often treat gender identity as secondary to national identity. Similarly, other researchers have approached the novel within the framework of nation-building, examining how it represents the Muslim League's perspective, elite Muslim women's roles, and colonial-era family structures.

However, these studies rarely apply a focused discourse analysis methodology, nor do they extensively explore how language and narrative strategies are employed to subvert sexist stereotypes embedded in both cultural and political discourses. Additionally, there is a noticeable lack of application of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) or Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) in analyzing this novel.

2.1 How My Research Fills This Gap

My research shifts the analytical focus from the nationalist-political reading of the novel to a gender-focused discourse study, aiming to uncover how sexist stereotypes are subverted through the narrative voice, character interactions, and ideological positioning of female characters, particularly Zohra.

Unlike previous work, I apply a combined theoretical framework of Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) and Michelle Lazar's Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). This allows me to critically examine the language used to construct and resist gender roles, within both the micro-context of family and personal relationships and the macro-context of political discourse and nationalist ideology.

Where earlier research has often described Zohra's independence as a symbolic gesture or nationalist trope, I interrogate how linguistic choices, narrative structure, and character voice in the novel work as tools of subversion—challenging the conventional portrayal of Muslim women as passive or peripheral. I explore how these subversions operate within and against dominant discourses, which is a dimension largely missing from existing studies.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research utilizes an interdisciplinary critical framework, integrating Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) with Michelle M. Lazar's Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), to examine how *The Heart Divided* by Mumtaz Shahnawaz both reflects and subverts deeply embedded sexist stereotypes in the socio-political fabric of pre-Partition South Asia. These two theoretical strands complement each other in their focus on the relationship between discourse, power, ideology, and identity, making them particularly effective for analyzing the linguistic and ideological representation of women in politically charged narratives.

3.1 Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)

DHA, developed by Ruth Wodak, is a strand of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that emphasizes the importance of examining language in its historical and socio-political context. It is based on the principle that discourse is not created in isolation but is deeply embedded in institutional, cultural, and historical power structures.

In this research, DHA allows for the analysis of how gender ideologies and patriarchal values are constructed, maintained, or challenged in the narrative of *The Heart Divided*, particularly in the context of British colonialism, Muslim nationalism, and family traditions. The novel is set during a transformative period in South Asian history—the 1930s and 1940s—when political identities and social roles were undergoing radical shifts. DHA makes it possible to trace how discursive representations of gender intersect with nationalist discourses, such as how women are depicted as both symbols of tradition and as participants in the modernizing impulse of Muslim society.

Key discourse strategies from DHA employed in the analysis include:

- Nomination: How characters, especially women, are named or identified (e.g., as “dutiful daughter,” “educated Muslim girl,” or “political rebel”), revealing underlying ideologies about gender.
- Predication: How attributes, qualities, or stereotypes are assigned to female

characters—whether they are portrayed as emotional, obedient, modern, or subversive.

- **Argumentation:** How ideological positions about gender roles are justified, naturalized, or contested in the dialogue and narration.
- **Interdiscursivity:** How different discourses—patriarchal, religious, nationalist—overlap, influence each other, or come into conflict within the text.

Through DHA, the study interrogates how discourse in *The Heart Divided* reflects broader historical anxieties and ambitions about gender, nationhood, and modernity.

3.2 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA)

FCDA, introduced by Michelle M. Lazar, is a feminist extension of CDA that focuses on how language constructs gendered identities and power hierarchies, and how these constructions can be challenged or resisted. FCDA is not merely descriptive—it is politically and socially committed to exposing and critiquing the ways discourse perpetuates gender inequality and offering space for subversion and agency.

In the context of *The Heart Divided*, FCDA enables a focused exploration of how patriarchal ideologies are encoded in language, and how women in the novel—particularly the protagonist Zohra—resist these ideologies through discursive strategies. For instance, Zohra’s engagement in political debates, her critique of arranged marriage, and her desire for education and autonomy are all expressed through language that both aligns with and departs from traditional gender norms.

Key analytical lenses from FCDA applied in this research include:

- **Gendered Representation:** How femininity and masculinity are defined, idealized, or problematized through discourse. For example, the juxtaposition of submissive female characters with assertive ones reveals varying models of womanhood.
- **Subversion and Resistance:** Identifying moments where characters question, reject, or reframe patriarchal assumptions—often subtly and through coded language.
- **Power Asymmetries:** Tracing how authority is linguistically constructed—who gets to speak, whose opinions are validated, and how female voices are silenced or

amplified in familial and political settings.

FCDA thus provides a critical lens to decode the strategies through which Mumtaz Shahnawaz's female characters negotiate space, voice, and power within a male-dominated society.

By integrating DHA and FCDA, this research offers a multi-dimensional perspective. While DHA roots the analysis in historical and political discourse, FCDA introduces a gender-conscious critique that highlights how women are both products and challengers of their socio-discursive environment. This combined approach is especially valuable for *The Heart Divided*, a novel that navigates both macro-discourses (such as colonialism and nationalism) and micro-discourses (such as family, education, and gender roles).

For instance, Zohra's conversations with her father and brothers are analyzed using predication and argumentation strategies (DHA) to show how traditional authority attempts to frame her identity. Simultaneously, FCDA is used to demonstrate how Zohra's questioning, rephrasing, and political reasoning act as discursive tools of feminist resistance. The layered discursive structure of the novel—where political speeches, family dialogues, and internal monologues interact—is explored through interdiscursivity, revealing how gender roles are continually negotiated.

The choice of DHA and FCDA as the guiding theoretical framework is deliberate and strategic. *The Heart Divided* is a deeply political and gendered text, and its full richness can only be understood through a framework that attends to both its historical situatedness and its gender dynamics. DHA enables a contextual reading of the ideological backdrop against which sexist norms are shaped, while FCDA allows for a critical feminist reading of how those norms are resisted through discourse. Together, they provide a comprehensive analytical toolkit to uncover the subversion of sexist stereotypes in one of Pakistan's earliest English novels written by a woman.

3.3 Text Selection Criterion

The novel *The Heart Divided* by Mumtaz Shahnawaz was selected as the primary source for this research due to its rich portrayal of social actors and the complex interplay

of gender, power, and social norms during the pre-partition era of the Indian subcontinent. This historical context offers fertile ground for applying Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach (DHA), particularly the strategy of Predication. Through this lens, the novel allows for a detailed examination of how women are discursively qualified how they are characterized, described, and attributed certain qualities within the sexist ideologies and power relations embedded in the narrative. The central objective of using the strategy of Predication is to uncover the ways in which social actors, specifically female characters, are portrayed in terms of their identity, roles, and relations to power structures, revealing the ultimate "unchangeable reality" of their lives as shaped by sexist assumptions.

In addition to *The Heart Divided*, the novel *The Blue Room* by Nafisa Rizvi has been selected for comparison to broaden the analysis of how different cultural, social, and historical contexts influence the discursive representation of women. While both novels present strong female characters navigating oppressive social practices, their distinct contexts—one set in a politically charged pre-partition India, the other in a more contemporary urban setting—provide a comparative framework to explore variations in how sexist ideologies manifest and are resisted. The comparative approach also supports a key principle of DHA: rather than universalizing sexist oppression, it acknowledges that such oppression is experienced differently depending on specific socio-political environments. Therefore, both texts, despite their differences in temporal and spatial settings, are ideal for examining how sexist social practices and power relations perpetuate stereotypical identities of women, and how these are subverted or upheld across different societal structures.

3.4 Method of Analysis

This study employs Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) as the primary method for analyzing *The Heart Divided* by Mumtaz Shahnawaz. DHA offers a framework for understanding how language and discourse interact with historical, social, and political contexts, making it an ideal tool for investigating how sexist ideologies are constructed and challenged in the text. The primary focus of the analysis is the strategy of Predication, which involves the discursive qualification of social actors, objects, phenomena, and events. This method enables a detailed examination of how the female

characters in the novel are characterized in relation to gender norms, social practices, and power relations. It also provides a structure for analyzing how patriarchal discourses within the novel contribute to the stereotypical identities of women, as well as moments where these discourses are subverted.

The research addresses two guiding questions: how the language in the novel shapes and propagates sexist stereotypes, and how Shahnawaz subverts the "man with a turban" stereotype. To answer these, the study conducts a close textual analysis of key scenes and dialogues, paying special attention to the ways in which language reflects and reinforces patriarchal ideologies. For example, the language used to describe women's roles within domestic spaces often echoes taken-for-granted sexist assumptions, such as women being confined to household duties. By identifying these patterns of discourse, the study reveals how deeply ingrained these stereotypes are in the narrative. Simultaneously, the analysis investigates how language serves as a tool for resistance, exploring how Shahnawaz's characters defy the roles imposed on them and how the "man with a turban" stereotype is reinterpreted.

3.5 Theoretical Framework

This study employs an integrated analytical framework grounded in Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) and Michelle M. Lazar's Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) to critically examine the subversion of sexist stereotypes in *The Heart Divided* by Mumtaz Shahnawaz. The analytical process is guided by the core strategies of DHA, especially the predication, nomination, and argumentation strategies, to uncover how female characters are constructed and positioned within the socio-political and historical discourse of colonial and pre-Partition India.

The predication strategy is used to analyze how certain qualities such as submissiveness, obedience, independence, or resistance are attributed to women in the text. This enables the identification of both conformist and subversive representations of femininity. The nomination strategy examines how women are named or referred to (e.g., daughter, sister, nationalist, or wife), shedding light on their social roles and identity constructions. The argumentation strategy is applied to reveal the justifications or reasoning used within the narrative to support or challenge specific gender roles and

ideological stances. Through these DHA strategies, the study explores how discourse reflects, reinforces, or contests patriarchal norms embedded in the cultural and political fabric of the time.

Parallel to this, FCDA brings a feminist lens to the analysis, emphasizing the gendered power relations, discursive silencing, and spaces of resistance within the novel. It focuses on how discourse contributes to the marginalization or empowerment of female characters, particularly in relation to intersectional identities shaped by class, nation, and family. FCDA guides the analysis of linguistic choices, narrative voice, and character development to trace where and how the novel challenges patriarchal ideologies, offering an alternative representation of womanhood. This involves identifying instances where women defy traditional gender expectations, assert agency, or engage in political and intellectual dialogue.

By combining DHA's attention to historical context and linguistic strategy with FCDA's critical feminist perspective, this analytical framework allows for a nuanced, multi-layered reading of *The Heart Divided*. It facilitates the identification of both implicit and explicit ways in which the novel resists sexist stereotypes, portraying women not merely as passive subjects of history but as active participants in shaping socio-political change. This integrated framework is especially effective for literary analysis where language, ideology, and historical positioning intersect to construct complex gender narratives.

The analytical framework combining the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) has been **purposefully** selected due to the multifaceted nature of the novel *The Heart Divided*, which intertwines themes of gender, politics, history, and identity. The central aim of this research is to explore the subversion of sexist stereotypes, and this requires a framework that not only investigates how gender is constructed through language, but also examines how historical and ideological contexts shape that construction. This is precisely where DHA and FCDA complement each other.

DHA, developed by Ruth Wodak, is especially suited to analyzing texts embedded in historical, cultural, and political contexts. Since *The Heart Divided* is set during the

tumultuous era of pre-Partition India, DHA enables the researcher to trace how language and discourse reflect the socio-political power dynamics of that time. It allows for the investigation of how dominant ideologies—such as patriarchy, nationalism, and colonialism—are either reinforced or resisted through the representation of characters, particularly women. The use of nomination, predication, and argumentation strategies helps uncover how female characters are labeled, described, and ideologically positioned, offering a deep understanding of how stereotypes are discursively produced or challenged.

On the other hand, FCDA, as articulated by Michelle M. Lazar, focuses explicitly on the gendered dimensions of power in discourse. Its feminist orientation is critical to this research because it centers the analysis on the ways in which women are silenced, marginalized, or empowered through language. FCDA provides the tools to interrogate how power is enacted, negotiated, or resisted in interactions between male and female characters. It is particularly helpful in identifying discursive moments where women reject submissive roles, speak back to authority, or assert their identity in male-dominated domains—moments that are crucial for identifying subversion of sexist stereotypes.

Together, DHA and FCDA create a robust and interdisciplinary framework that not only captures the nuances of gendered discourse but also situates these within historical and ideological contexts. This dual focus is necessary because *The Heart Divided* is not just a literary text but a political and feminist statement. The combined framework allows for a critical reading of how Mumtaz Shahnawaz's characters negotiate their roles in a patriarchal society and how the narrative itself becomes a tool for resisting dominant gender ideologies. In short, this analytical framework was chosen because it best aligns with the objectives of the research: to examine how sexist stereotypes are formed and, more importantly, how they are deconstructed through discourse.

The Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) is a critical component of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). DHA is distinguished by its multidimensional analysis of texts, which incorporates historical, social, and political contexts. It is based on the works of scholars such as Ruth Wodak. (Wodak, 2015) emphasises that DHA goes beyond linguistic analysis by incorporating theory, methodology, and empirically based research practices. This approach distinguishes itself by emphasizing the diachronic dimension of discourse,

in which texts are examined not only in their immediate context but also in the context of their historical evolution.

The historical development of DHA can be traced back to the late 20th century, arising as a result of the demand for discourse analysis methods that are more contextually informed. Wodak's influential works have played a crucial role in shaping the direction of DHA (Critical discourse analysis, discourse-historical approach 1-14). The approach stemmed from a commitment to comprehending the ways in which discourses, particularly those related to social issues such as racism, sexism, and discrimination, are intertwined with historical and societal frameworks. According to (Reisigl, 2017), DHA focuses on the relationship between discourse and societal changes, offering a thorough understanding of the text's influence and origins ("The discourse-historical approach" 44-59). Gender studies, especially when analysing literary texts, can benefit from the use of DHA as a valuable tool for exploring the complex depiction of gender and the challenging of stereotypes. This approach is highly applicable when analysing texts such as Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided*. The portrayal of women in this work is not solely a result of the author's creativity, but also a reflection of the socio-historical circumstances of that era. Lazar's research delves into the intricate nuances of gender discourse, shedding light on the complex power dynamics and societal norms that influence gender identities in literature (Lazar, Gender, discourse and semiotics: The politics of parenthood representations, 2000). Through the integration of historical context and textual analysis, a more nuanced comprehension of the construction, challenge, and potential transformation of sexist stereotypes within literary works is facilitated by the approach known as DHA.

DHA makes a substantial contribution to the study of gender representation in literature by providing a thorough framework that is essential for comprehending not only the text but also the larger socio-cultural and historical context in which it was written. An essential element of Critical Discourse Analysis, the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) is predicated on three fundamental elements: discourse, historical context, and sociopolitical variables. By providing a foundation for DHA, this triad enables one to develop a more nuanced comprehension of literary narratives and character growth. The discourse in DHA encompasses more than just written or spoken language; it encompasses all forms of semiotic communication (Wodak, 2015). Within the domain of literature,

discourse plays a crucial role in shaping the structure of narratives and the development of characters. It serves as a means of conveying ideologies and beliefs. According to (Wodak, 2015), discourse is a type of social activity that plays a crucial role in creating and reshaping social realities. An examination of Mumtaz Shahnawaz's language in *The Heart Divided* is essential for understanding how it both constructs and questions societal norms.

The historical dimension in DHA is crucial for placing discourse within its temporal and cultural context (Reisigl, 2017). This aspect is especially important when analysing literature that mirrors distinct historical periods or societal disruptions, like the partition in *The Heart Divided*. The historical context adds a layer of depth and substance to the narrative and the characters' motivations, enriching the discourse. By exploring Shahnawaz's work in the context of the partition era, a more profound understanding of the societal norms and gender roles that the novel aims to tackle is achieved. The impact of sociopolitical structures on discourse is acknowledged by DHA (Meyer, 2009). This principle recognises that literature is not created in isolation, but rather serves as a mirror of the power dynamics, gender roles, and cultural norms present in society. In the analysis of *The Heart Divided*, it is important to consider the sociopolitical aspect and how the novel explores and questions the patriarchal norms that are deeply ingrained in South Asian society. The studies conducted by Lazar in 1993 and 2000 shed light on the relationship between gender discourse, semiotics, and the representation of women in Shahnawaz's narrative. These studies offer a valuable framework for comprehending the impact of sociopolitical factors on the portrayal of female characters. These elements working together—discourse, historical setting, and sociopolitical factors—provide a thorough framework for literary analysis. This tripartite method, when applied to *The Heart Divided*, enables a nuanced comprehension of how Shahnawaz negotiates and challenges conventional gender stereotypes through her story, which is set against the backdrop of a momentous historical event and deeply ingrained sociopolitical norms.

As a critical tool within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) provides a nuanced framework for deconstructing gender stereotypes in literary texts. This method, which is based on the interaction of discourse, historical context, and sociopolitical variables, is especially effective in analysing texts in which gender roles and identities are central themes. The effectiveness of DHA in

scrutinising gender stereotypes is rooted in its comprehensive examination of discourse, which is a social phenomenon intricately intertwined with historical and societal circumstances (Meyer, 2009). This methodology facilitates a thorough comprehension of the ways in which gender identities are established, sustained, and potentially undermined within a particular literary work. By placing equal emphasis on the substance and circumstances of conversations, DHA empowers scholars to decipher the intricate webs of significance that contribute to the development of gender stereotypes.

In Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided*, DHA enables a detailed analysis of the narrative techniques that shape and question the stereotypical portrayal of women. For example, the portrayal of the Zenana and Mardana divisions within the household not only strengthens the conventional separation of genders, but also symbolises the wider societal limitations imposed on women (Nawaz, 1990). By examining DHA, we can analyse how the spatial metaphors in the novel both mirror and sustain gender stereotypes in the patriarchal context of South Asia. In addition, through an analysis of the linguistic choices and narrative structures in *The Heart Divided*, DHA helps reveal the subtle ways in which Shahnawaz challenges patriarchal norms. In Nawaz's work, the characters Zohra and Sughra serve as powerful tools for challenging conventional gender norms. They skillfully navigate the intricate web of their own desires and the pressures imposed by society (Nawaz, 1990). According to (Lazar, Gender, discourse and semiotics: The politics of parenthood representations, 2000), analysing discourse can uncover the power dynamics and ideological constructs within gender relations. DHA excels at linking the specific linguistic expressions in the text to wider historical and sociopolitical contexts. This connection is vital in comprehending how gender stereotypes go beyond individual characters or isolated narrative events and are deeply rooted in the societal fabric, shaped by historical and cultural forces (Reisigl, 2017).

As for the methodological approach, the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA), which is a branch of Critical Discourse Analysis, offers a strong framework for examining texts, specifically in uncovering the complex layers of significance that contribute to the formation of social realities and identities. According to (Meyer, 2009), this approach is characterised by its multidimensional nature, which involves the integration of diverse data, methods, theories, and grammatical approaches. DHA's strength lies in its capacity to

analyse texts not only from a linguistic perspective, but also from a historical and social standpoint, providing a thorough comprehension of discourse as a social activity (Wodak, 2015). In analyzing Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided*, the DHA methodology will be instrumental in exploring how the novel navigates and challenges the entrenched sexist stereotypes within the South Asian cultural milieu. This novel, set against the backdrop of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent, provides fertile ground for examining the intersectionality of gender, politics, and culture (Nawaz, 1990).

In order to analyse *The Heart Divided* through the lens of DHA, we shall commence by discerning the precise subject matter or dilemmas that traverse the novel. This necessitates a meticulous examination in order to identify the overarching themes and associated subthemes that pertain to gender and identity. The discursive construction of gender is frequently concealed in subtle linguistic cues and thematic decisions, as noted by Lazar (2000). This analytical process can unveil these elements. The novel's discursive techniques will then be examined in detail. This entails analysing the ways in which Shahnawaz presents gender roles and stereotypes, and how these portrayals either support or challenge accepted social norms. For example, the way the Zenana and Mardana sections of the house are portrayed in the book represents gender segregation and its effects in a patriarchal society in addition to being a spatial division (Rafique Ahmed Memon, 2020).

In addition, I will analyse the linguistic elements, considering their types and specific realisations in context. This step requires a thorough analysis of the language used to depict characters, settings, and actions, with a focus on how these linguistic choices either reinforce or question gender biases. For example, the character's adept handling of spaces such as the Zenana and Mardana, along with their thought-provoking dialogues and introspective musings, provide valuable insights into the prevailing societal expectations and the personal struggles against them (Nawaz, 1990). Furthermore, in line with Wodak's emphasis on the historical context in DHA (Wodak, 2015), the analysis will extend to how historical events and social contexts within the novel influence and are influenced by the discourse. The backdrop of the Partition and its attendant social upheavals provides a critical context to the gender dynamics portrayed in the novel.

When examining gender representation in literature, the Discourse Historical

Approach (DHA) has been essential in offering nuanced insights into the intricate interactions between language, power, and social norms. Prior research utilising DHA has illuminated the ways in which literary texts both reinforce and contest dominant gender stereotypes, hence as well as in the representation of women in literature. Lazar's work on gender discourse and semiotics, for example, emphasises the usefulness of DHA in deconstructing gendered narratives in literature (Lazar, "Gender, Discourse, and Semiotics"). Lazar's analysis, which frequently intersects with DHA principles, focuses on how literary texts can reinforce or subvert traditional gender roles. This viewpoint is critical in examining *The Heart Divided*, in which Mumtaz Shahnawaz navigates the complexities of Muslim women's identities in the midst of societal upheaval. In the same vein, Reisigl's delineation of the discourse-historical approach within the realm of critical discourse studies provides significant methodological perspectives (Reisigl, 2017). The author's focus on the historical backdrop in discourse analysis corresponds to the examination of *The Heart Divided*, specifically in light of the novel's setting of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent, a significant historical occurrence that influences the storyline and the experiences of its characters.

In *The Heart Divided*, Shahnawaz delves into the representation of women within the tumultuous era of Partition. The novel's portrayal of characters like Zohra and Sughra exemplifies the struggle against the entrenched sexist stereotypes within South Asian society (Nawaz 68). Through DHA, these characters' narratives can be dissected to reveal the underlying discourse of gender and power dynamics. (Wodak, 2015) has made significant contributions to Critical Discourse Analysis, specifically through her focus on the historical-discourse analysis approach. This approach offers a strong framework for analysing texts such as *The Heart Divided* (Wodak, "Critical Discourse Analysis, Discourse-Historical Approach"). Wodak's analysis of discourse within its historical context is particularly relevant in understanding how Shahnawaz's novel questions patriarchal norms and sexist stereotypes, by shedding light on the roles of women during a significant period in South Asian history.

The Heart Divided skillfully interlaces the storyline with prominent female characters, such as Zohra and Sughra, against the backdrop of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent. The novel confronts traditional male-dominated norms and explores the

complexities of women's experiences in a society filled with discriminatory stereotypes. Shahnawaz explains the concept of 'purdah' (seclusion), which plays a crucial role in defining the gender roles and societal expectations placed on women (Nawaz, 1990). This serves as a central point for examination via DHA, as it exemplifies the systemic frameworks that perpetuate gender inequality.

(Wodak, 2015) defines DHA as a framework for dissecting the historical and societal contexts that shape discourse. DHA can be applied to *The Heart Divided* to examine how Shahnawaz uses language and narrative structure to both mirror and challenge gender norms of her time. The novel's discourse reflects prevalent patriarchal ideologies while also subverting these norms through the portrayal of strong, independent female characters. For example, when Zohra pleads with her father to participate in a public debate, defying the traditional norms of 'purdah', it signifies a critical moment of resistance against gender stereotypes (Nawaz, 1990). This instance can be analyzed through DHA to understand how language serves as a vehicle for challenging established social structures. As Wodak and (Meyer, 2009) suggest, discourse is instrumental in both constructing and contesting social identities and power dynamics. Moreover, DHA can be used to examine the character development in *The Heart Divided* in order to reveal the linguistic techniques Shahnawaz uses to challenge sexist stereotypes. (Lazar, Gender, discourse and semiotics: The politics of parenthood representations, 2000) highlights the significance of investigating the ways in which gender ideologies are incorporated and challenged in discourse. This subversion is best illustrated by Sughra's transition from upholding traditional roles to discovering empowerment in political activism. Her trip is a verbal protest against the stereotypes of female subjugation that were pervasive in the popular discourse of her era.

When examining gender studies, specifically the analysis of literary texts such as Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided*, there are certain challenges and limitations that arise when applying the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA). The challenges arise mainly from the intricate nature of gender discourse and the historical backdrop of the texts.

Multidimensionality of Gender Discourse - Gender discourse, particularly in

literature, is far from being a simple and one-dimensional topic. It is characterised by multiple layers and intricacies, as highlighted by Butler and Trouble in 1990. DHA, although strong, can occasionally oversimplify the intricate portrayals of gender, missing out on the intricate layers of significance that arise from the interplay of historical, cultural, and social contexts.

Historical Context and Contemporary Interpretation - The historical context in which *The Heart Divided* was written is quite distinct from the current socio-political landscape (Nawaz, 1990). DHA's focus on historical conditions may result in interpretations that are out of sync with contemporary perspectives on gender when applied retrospectively to the text.

Intersectionality - Gender stereotypes in literature frequently intersect with other aspects of social stratification, including class, race, and ethnicity (Mohanty, 1984). DHA, in its traditional form, may not fully consider these intersectionalities, which could result in a less comprehensive examination of gender dynamics.

Authorial Intent vs. Textual Analysis - DHA places a strong focus on the text and its historical context, which can sometimes lead to making speculative assumptions about the author's intentions. This becomes particularly challenging when examining works in which the author's personal perspectives on gender roles are not clearly documented (Lazar, *Equalizing gender relations: A case of double-talk*, 1993).

Potential for Subjectivity - The interpretation of discourses can be highly subjective. The researcher's own biases and perspectives might influence the analysis, leading to conclusions that reflect personal ideologies rather than the text's inherent meanings (Wodak, 2015).

To mitigate these challenges, a multi-pronged approach is suggested. **Incorporating Intersectional Analysis** - To gain a deeper understanding of the intricate layers of gender representation, complement DHA with theories that specifically address intersectionality, such as those put forth by (Mohanty, 1984). **Balancing Historical Context with Contemporary Understanding** - While maintaining a focus on historical context, integrate contemporary gender theories to provide a more balanced interpretation of the text (Butler & Trouble, 1990). **Triangulating Analysis with Multiple Theoretical Frameworks** -

Combine DHA with other critical theories (e.g., feminist theory, postcolonial theory) to gain a more comprehensive understanding of gender stereotypes (Reisigl, 2017). Emphasizing Reflexivity in Research - Adopt a reflexive approach where the researcher remains critically aware of their own biases and perspectives, thus ensuring a more objective analysis (Fairclough, 2001). Utilizing Collaborative Discourse Analysis - Employ collaborative discourse analysis with scholars hailing from various disciplines in order to offer a comprehensive evaluation that mitigates the potential for subjective interpretations (Wodak, 2015).

Applying the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) to Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided* is expected to provide detailed insights into how gender stereotypes are created and challenged in South Asian literature. This analysis delves into the layers of discourse within the narrative, emphasising the complex relationship between language, historical context, and social constructs in the formation of gender identities. The crucial result will be a comprehensive comprehension of how Shahnawaz, utilising her storytelling skills, manoeuvres and questions the deeply rooted patriarchal conventions. The DHA framework, which prioritises historical context, facilitates a thorough analysis of how the characters in the novel, especially women, both embody and challenge the prevailing gender stereotypes in their society. (Wodak, 2015) argues that understanding discourses and sociopolitical dynamics requires considering the historical context.

The analysis will look at the language used by Shahnawaz to portray her female protagonists through the lens of DHA. The characters Zohra and Sughra are expected to reveal layers of linguistic subversion against patriarchal norms. Their journeys from the confines of the Zenana to public assertion will be studied as acts of resistance to gender stereotypes. This is consistent with (Lazar, Equalizing gender relations: A case of double-talk, 1993) discussion of how gendered discourse can both reinforce and challenge societal norms. Moreover, the study will explore how the novel's portrayal of the veil, not just as a physical but also a metaphorical barrier, contributes to our understanding of gendered spaces.

Additionally, the novel will emphasise the nuanced depiction of male characters. The study will unveil the intricacies of male complicity and resistance to patriarchal norms

through an analysis of their interactions and attitudes towards female characters. Unveiling the multifaceted characteristics of sexist stereotypes, as (Blum, 2004) argues, will require a firm grasp of this particular facet.

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework of the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) as a lens for analysing Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided*. By integrating DHA's focus on historical and socio-political context with FCDA's emphasis on gendered power relations, this analytical framework enables a comprehensive and multi-layered exploration of discourse within *The Heart Divided*. It allows for a detailed investigation of how language not only constructs gender ideologies but also how it serves as a site for their contestation. This fusion of approaches is particularly effective in revealing how Mumtaz Shahnawaz, through her narrative and character development, critiques and redefines stereotypical representations of women. The combined framework thus provides a critical lens to examine how the novel challenges patriarchal discourse, empowering female voices within a historical narrative traditionally dominated by male perspectives.

Of particular relevance to our study is the notion of gender ideology, as explored by (Lazar, Equalizing gender relations: A case of double-talk, 1993) (Lazar, Gender, discourse and semiotics: The politics of parenthood representations, 2000), which forms the basis for the development of sexist stereotypes. *The Heart Divided* provides a captivating textual backdrop for this exploration, where the depiction of women in the contrasting realms of the Zanana and Mardana reflects the deeply ingrained patriarchal customs (Nawaz, 1990). Butler and Trouble (1990) provide valuable theoretical insights into the subversion of identity, which enhance our understanding of the novel's narrative strategies in challenging traditional gender roles.

As we move on to the following analytical sections, this theoretical framework will play a crucial role in examining the structure and content of *The Heart Divided*. We will utilise the DHA (Discourse Historical Approach) to analyse particular instances in the novel, such as the interactions between characters and their dialogues, which shed light on the undermining of sexist stereotypes commonly found in South Asian cultural contexts.

In essence, the ensuing chapters will unfold the layered narrative of *The Heart Divided* through the prism of DHA, unraveling the complexities of gender representation and challenging the entrenched patriarchal ideologies that have long governed societal discourse.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Preceding chapters of this thesis have embarked on a journey through the intricate layers of gender construction and the perpetuation of sexist stereotypes, particularly in South Asian culture. The focal point has been Mumtaz Shahnawaz's seminal work, *The Heart Divided*, a novel that not only mirrors the societal norms of its time but also offers a window into the intricate dynamics of gender roles and identities. I have explored, through a theoretical lens, how gender is not just a biological demarcation but a cultural construct that significantly influences the fabric of societal interactions and individual identities (Unger, 1995).

This section aims to conduct a thorough analysis of *The Heart Divided* using the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) developed by Wodak (2015). This chapter seeks to reveal the various levels of language and narrative structure that play a role in depicting and occasionally challenging sexist prejudices in the novel. I want to not only identify these features but also comprehend their purpose and influence within the narrative's wider socio-cultural framework. The DHA, particularly its Predication strategy, serves as a critical tool in this analysis. Predication, in the realm of DHA, refers to the linguistic process of attributing specific qualities, characteristics, or properties to social actors (Reisigl, 2017). By examining how characters are described, the attributes they are assigned, and the roles they are placed in, we can gain insight into how sexist stereotypes are constructed and possibly challenged within the text. This chapter will feature key passages from *The Heart Divided* that vividly demonstrate the use of linguistic devices to shape, reinforce, or challenge sexist stereotypes. These selections will be thoroughly examined, using the Prediction strategy and other aspects of DHA to reveal the underlying gender discourses. Additionally, a comparative analysis will be included, connecting our research to previous studies on sexist stereotypes in literature and feminist discourse. This will offer a multifaceted understanding of Shahnawaz's work in addition to placing our analysis within the larger field of gender studies. As noted by Lazar (2000), analysing gender discourse involves more than just academic study; it also entails a critical examination of the social structures that both define and frequently restrict gender

identities.

The objective is to make a scholarly contribution to the ongoing discourse regarding the portrayal of gender in literature, with a specific focus on South Asian narratives. In these narratives, cultural and social norms frequently intricately intertwine with gender roles (Karki, 2010). Through a meticulous analysis of the narrative techniques and linguistic choices utilised in *The Heart Divided*, this chapter endeavours to shed light on the intricate ways in which literary works can simultaneously mirror and contest dominant sexist ideologies.

The fourth chapter of the thesis will primarily examine the discourse analysis of Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided* using the Predication strategy, which is a component of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). This approach, firmly grounded in the research of prominent scholars such as Wodak (2001, 2015) and Reisigl (2017), is crucial for comprehending the manner in which language is employed to shape identities and attributes, specifically those of social individuals. Predication entails a thorough analysis of linguistic components, such as adjectives, nouns, and pronouns, that attribute qualities, whether positive or negative, to these entities. Within the framework of *The Heart Divided*, this approach becomes essential for examining how Shahnawaz establishes the female gender as a societal and hierarchical 'other,' specifically through the language employed to depict female characters.

The Prediction strategy involves the recognition of evaluative and stereotypical characteristics, which is crucial for examining the manner in which particular linguistic decisions in the novel depict female characters, potentially serving to strengthen or contest preexisting stereotypes. This aspect holds significant importance in light of the scholarly literature on gender stereotypes, as Blum (2004) has observed. Furthermore, linguistic devices and explicit predicates contribute directly to character perception. The research will centre on analysing the manner in which the narrative frames the female characters through the use of verbs, adjectives, and nouns. A solid foundation for this analysis is established in the works of Lazar (1993, 2000). Furthermore, an examination of collocations present in the text will unveil the consistent arrangement of words in opposition to one another and the resulting influence on the correlation between various

notions, including masculinity and strength or femininity and weakness, as explicated in the study by Wodak (2015).

For a comprehensive analysis, key passages from *The Heart Divided* will be selected, specifically those that vividly illustrate the use of linguistic devices in shaping sexist stereotypes. The study will dissect these passages to highlight the language's role in constructing the identity and social roles of the female characters. This will involve a detailed examination of the text, applying the Predication strategy to decode the nuanced messages conveyed about gender roles and stereotypes. The theoretical underpinning for this analysis will be drawn from the framework provided by Wodak and other scholars in critical discourse studies, allowing for a deep dive into the text's language at both micro and macro levels.

Finally, the findings of *The Heart Divided* will be interpreted in light of existing literature on sexist stereotypes in literature and feminist discourse. This comparative discussion will draw on the work of scholars such as Deaux (2011), Blum (2004), and Brannon (2005), who have studied gender identity and sexist stereotypes in depth. This chapter's analysis seeks to contribute significant insights to the ongoing discussion about gender representation in literature by situating Shahnawaz's novel within this broader academic discourse.

Shahnawaz uses evaluative and stereotyped characteristics to create her female characters in *The Heart Divided* according to the social hierarchy. For example, the novel frequently uses terms that are typically associated with femininity in South Asian cultures such as "docile" and "submissive" to describe women. Adjectives are used to place women in a conventional, inferior social role initially. But as Shahnawaz's characters develop, she subverts these characteristics, questioning their conventional roles. According to Lazar (1993), the shift in descriptive language corresponds with a change in gender identity.

Shahnawaz's use of explicit predicates and predicative nouns exposes underlying societal attitudes towards women. In one scene, a male character refers to a woman as 'merely a wife', reducing her entire existence to her marital status (Nawaz, 1990). This linguistic choice echoes Michel's (1986) observation that women are frequently limited to

roles determined by their relationship with men. The novel, through its narrative journey, challenges this confinement by giving its female characters identities beyond their relational roles.

Additionally, the novel's deliberate employment of adjectives and pronouns aids in the formation of female identity. Attributes such as 'emotional' and 'weak' are often ascribed to female characters, which serves as an indication of the pervasiveness of sexist stereotypes (Nawaz, 1990). Nevertheless, as the storyline unfolds, these concepts are challenged or reclaimed by the characters, symbolising their personal transformation towards autonomy. This is consistent with Unger's (1995) viewpoint regarding the malleability of gender identity.

Collocations such as 'delicate woman' or 'strong man' further reinforce gender binaries (Nawaz, 1990). The novel challenges these binaries by presenting scenarios where women display strength and resilience, thereby breaking away from traditional collocational patterns.

4.1 Example 1: Subversion of Traditional Roles

A pivotal moment in *The Heart Divided* is reached when the main character, Zohra, challenges the custom of arranged marriage. This is a crucial point in the novel's thematic exploration as well as the character's growth. Zohra's declaration, "I wish to chart my own course" (Nawaz, 1990, p. 112), is a courageous act of self-determination in a society where women's decisions, particularly those related to marriage, are frequently influenced by social and familial norms.

Linguistic Analysis through Predication Strategy: the utilisation of the Predication strategy in the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) enables us to analyse this statement and its consequences regarding the representation of gender roles. The verb phrase "wish to chart" is highly revealing. The term "wish" denotes a strong desire and personal longing, which represents a notable departure from the passive acceptance of societal norms. The selection of the term "chart," commonly linked with navigation and plotting routes, metaphorically applies these ideas to the realm of personal autonomy and self-guided life planning.

Subversion of Traditional Gender Roles: Given that Zohra's statement echoes the belief that women should have the autonomy to choose their own paths in life, it poses a direct challenge to the traditional, submissive role that women play in matrimonial decisions. "Charting one's own course" suggests a journey that is autonomous and self-directed, which stands in stark contrast to the predetermined routes that patriarchal societies frequently force on women. This expression denotes not only independence but also a rejection of the typical path that a woman should take in her social environment.

Comparative Gender Dynamics: In traditional South Asian contexts, as depicted in *The Heart Divided*, women's roles are frequently limited to meeting familial and societal expectations. Zohra's refusal to accept an arranged marriage and desire to make her own decisions represent a significant departure from these roles. This act of defiance is both personal and symbolic, reflecting a larger theme of feminist resistance to patriarchal structures.

Reflection on Societal Implications: The ramifications of Zohra's declaration transcend her individual experience, mirroring an overarching societal discourse concerning the responsibilities and entitlements of females. Many readers identify with her aspiration to "forge her own path," especially those who comprehend the restrictions that arise from residing in a society that frequently restricts the options available to women. Through the expression of this longing, Shahnawaz not only constructs an alluring and relatable persona in Zohra, but also makes a scholarly contribution to the discourse surrounding the autonomy and empowerment of women.

Zohra's statement and subsequent analysis offer profound insights into how Shahnawaz employs language to question conventional gender norms. This scene exemplifies the novel's function as a platform for critiquing and potentially altering societal views on gender, emphasising the process of women's empowerment and achieving equality.

4.2 Example 2: Challenging Stereotypes through Language

Contextualizing Sughra's Statement: In *The Heart Divided*, Sughra's character undergoes a profound transformation that is encapsulated in her statement, "Marriage should not be the boundary of my dreams" (Nawaz, 1990, p. 150). This moment is pivotal

as it reflects her disillusionment with a loveless marriage and signifies a broader critique of societal norms. Her journey from a conforming individual to one who questions and challenges established norms speaks volumes about the evolving nature of female identity in the narrative.

Linguistic Analysis of the Statement: Upon examining this statement via the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) lens, with a particular emphasis on the usage of "border" as a predicative noun, it is evident that conventional norms have been subverted. A limit or barrier is implied by the term "border," which is typically connected to physical demarcations. But when one uses it in relation to their goals and dreams, it alludes to the constraints placed on women by society norms. This is consistent with Blum's (2004) findings regarding the ways in which stereotypes define and constrain personal identities and roles, frequently in ways that are detrimental and constricting.

The Stereotype of Marriage as Fulfillment: Sughra's remark directly challenges the long-held stereotype that marriage is the ultimate, and often only, source of fulfillment for women. This stereotype, which is deeply ingrained in many cultures, particularly in the novel's South Asian setting, holds that a woman's highest achievement and primary aspiration should be a successful marriage. Sughra defies this notion by declaring marriage a 'boundary', implying that her aspirations and dreams go beyond the societal construct of marriage.

Societal Implications and Reactions: This act of challenging an ingrained social convention is not without recognition. The statement made by Sughra elicits a range of reactions from the other characters, including disapproval and admiration. It incites a reassessment of the societal expectations and roles placed upon women, thereby inspiring additional female characters to contemplate their own ambitions and the constraints imposed by society.

Comparison with Feminist Literature: Sughra's narrative reflects themes commonly found in feminist literature, where marriage is depicted as a multifaceted institution that has the potential to both empower and restrict women. Simone de Beauvoir and Virginia Woolf, among other writers, have examined parallel themes, stressing that women's identities and value should not be exclusively hinge on their marital status. Sughra's

position reflects these emotions and adds to a broader discussion on women's independence and selfhood that extends beyond the marital confines.

Sughra's statement in *The Heart Divided* serves as a powerful testament to the novel's engagement with feminist themes, particularly in challenging the traditional stereotypes associated with marriage and women's roles. Her character's evolution and the linguistic expression of her disillusionment offer a nuanced critique of the societal expectations placed upon women, encouraging a re-examination of traditional gender roles.

4.3 Expanded Comparative Analysis

Aligning with Broader Feminist Discourse: The linguistic subtleties present in Mumtaz Shahnawaz's 'The Heart Divided' go beyond the domain of literary aesthetics and are intricately connected to feminist discourse. Shahnawaz's methodology closely resembles the fundamental principles outlined in Judith Butler's seminal work 'Gender Trouble' (1990), which posits that gender is not a static concept but rather a malleable construct that is influenced and transformed by societal conventions and individual behaviours. The novel 'The Heart Divided' showcases the fluidity of female characters as they skillfully navigate and frequently challenge the limitations imposed on them, thus undermining the rigid gender roles and binaries that have traditionally been assigned to women.

Similarly, Shahnawaz's narrative echoes Norman Fairclough's views on language and power dynamics (2001). Fairclough contends that language is a type of social practice that both reflects and shapes social structures. In Shahnawaz's novel, language serves as both a means of revealing and challenging sexist stereotypes. The characters' dialogue, narrative description, and internal monologues not only depict patriarchal society, but also express resistance and envision alternatives.

Linguistic Tools as Instruments of Change: Shahnawaz's strategic use of language in 'The Heart Divided' effectively turns the novel into a tool for social critique and change. By carefully crafting dialogues and descriptions, she lays bare the oppressive structures while simultaneously fostering a sense of empowerment and resistance among her characters. This dual role of language - as both a mirror to existing inequalities and a hammer to reshape them - is central to the novel's impact.

The Heart Divided's depiction of female characters is especially illuminating. By their words and deeds, these characters contest the preconceived notions that attempt to restrict and delineate them. This narrative technique aptly illustrates the capacity of language to instigate societal transformation, which is consistent with the perspective of feminist theorists who contend that language plays a crucial role in both upholding and dismantling patriarchal systems.

The Novel in the Landscape of Feminist Literature: *The Heart Divided* is a noteworthy work that adds to ongoing discussions about gender, power, and societal norms in the larger context of feminist literature. It offers a distinct viewpoint firmly anchored in the South Asian context, sharing thematic concerns and narrative techniques of early feminist writers and theorists. The novel's examination of gender roles, identity, and resistance deepens our knowledge of feminist movements throughout various societal contexts.

Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided* is not just a narrative reflecting the societal conditions of its time; it is a potent feminist statement. Through its adept use of language, the novel participates in a larger feminist discourse, echoing and contributing to critical conversations about gender roles, identity, and power dynamics. Its place in feminist literature is marked by its ability to use linguistic devices not just for storytelling but as instruments for challenging and redefining the contours of female identity in a patriarchal society.

4.4 Passage 1: The Concept of 'Purdah'

Excerpt from *The Heart Divided*: "In a dialogue where Zohra's father prohibits her from participating in a public debate, citing her status of being in 'purdah' (Shahnawaz, 1957, p. 68), the traditional practice of seclusion is spotlighted."

4.4.1 Application of Predication Strategy

This passage's use of predication—more especially, the father's claim about "purdah"—serves to perpetuate the stereotype of women as reclusive and domestic. This predication, or linguistic construction, is an echo of broader society norms as well as a reflection of the author's personal beliefs. The father's remarks represent the collective

voice of a society that enforces women's absence from public spaces and act as a conduit for more general cultural ideologies. This is a classic case of language maintaining and reflecting deeply ingrained gender roles.

4.4.2 Detailed Analysis

This passage provides a vivid example of societal expectations placed on women, particularly in the context of South Asian cultures. The concept of 'purdah' represents more than just a physical veil; it is a barrier to female participation in public life, highlighting society's deeply ingrained sexist stereotypes. Zohra's father, acting as a gatekeeper of societal norms, uses language to confine her to the domestic sphere, perpetuating the traditional patriarchal narrative.

From this standpoint, the term 'purdah' transcends its cultural significance and represents the systematic marginalisation and silencing of women. This is consistent with Wodak's (2015) discourse-historical approach, which highlights the influence of historical and societal contexts on the way language is employed to maintain power structures. Not only are the father's remarks personal, but they also reflect a larger discourse that has historically and methodically confined the responsibilities of women to the realm of the private.

In addition, the father's selection of vocabulary and the resoluteness in his voice demonstrate an unwavering commitment to patriarchal conventions, indicating an ingrained ideology where the regulation of female movement and presence is considered standard. This conversation not only involves a father and daughter talking but also represents a small-scale version of the social system where gender roles are clearly defined and upheld through language.

The passage also hints at the resistance to change in traditional societies. Zohra's silent presence in this dialogue is emblematic of the lack of voice and agency often experienced by women in patriarchal societies. The absence of her direct speech in this critical conversation further underscores her marginalized position.

4.5 Passage 2: Marriage as a Site of Female Agency in *The Heart Divided*

"Sughra's confrontation about her arranged marriage, where she expresses that marriage should be based on love and respect (Shahnawaz, 1957, p. 106)."

4.5.1 Application of Predication Strategy

In this passage, Sughra utilises predicates that highlight the concepts of 'love' and 'respect', which sharply juxtapose the conventional discourse that frequently revolves around obligations, compliance, and familial anticipations in arranged marriages. This language choice not only questions but actively redefines the normative narrative around marriage in South Asian contexts.

4.5.2 Expanded Analysis

This excerpt from *The Heart Divided* serves as a watershed moment in the novel's subversion of the traditional narrative surrounding arranged marriage. Sughra's assertive dialogue represents resistance to the patriarchal structure that defines marriage as a transactional and obligatory union. Her emphasis on love and respect as foundational elements of marriage represents a progressive and almost radical idea, particularly given the time period in which the novel is set.

Sughra's expression of her marriage expectations transcends mere individual pride; it represents a more extensive contestation of the traditional societal conventions that have historically prescribed the responsibilities and positions of women. By emphasising mutual love and respect, her discourse deviates from the conventional understanding of marriage as a societal duty and instead establishes it as a collaborative alliance among individuals of equal standing. This statement not only questions the patriarchal structure of matrimony but also advocates for psychological and emotional satisfaction within the union.

Moreover, this conversation is consistent with Lazar's (2000) theories on gender and discourse. Lazar talks about how discourse can be used to support or contradict prevailing gender norms. Sughra's speech serves as an example of how the novel challenges and subverts traditional gender discourse by using language as a tool. Sughra challenges the passive, submissive role that is frequently assigned to women in stories about marriage

by speaking out about her opinions and instead presents a character who is conscious of her desires and not afraid to express them.

Sughra's words have a far-reaching impact that goes beyond her own personal narrative. They embody a revolutionary vision for the role of women in society, promoting independence and equal regard within marital partnerships. This depiction not only offers a critical analysis of the current societal structure, but also presents an idealised example of relationships founded on equal treatment and shared comprehension, aligning with the feminist principles of independence and personal fulfilment.

4.6 Passage 3: Excerpt from The Heart Divided

"The moment where Zohra and Sughra decide to remove their veils" (Shahnawaz, 1957), symbolizes a significant step toward rejecting imposed invisibility.

4.6.1 Application of Predication Strategy

The taking off the veil is not only a literal action in this context but also a potent symbolic predicate. It represents a shift from being passive objects of patriarchal norms to being active agents who shape their own identities. This action challenges the societal narratives surrounding women's visibility and roles, in addition to rejecting a physical barrier.

4.6.2 Detailed Analysis

Symbolism of the Veil: The veil in this passage is more than just a piece of clothing; it is also a symbol with cultural and societal implications. Its removal serves as a metaphor for shedding the various layers of patriarchal constraints. The veil, which is commonly regarded as a symbol of modesty and submissiveness in many cultures, is repurposed here as a tool of empowerment and resistance.

Shift in Gender Roles: A turning point in the novel, the decision made by Zohra and Sughra to remove their veils signifies a transformation in the way female characters are portrayed. The portrayal shifts from the conventional idea of women as being restricted to the home domain to recognising them as engaged contributors in the public sphere. This act of resistance holds significant importance as it serves to symbolise the characters' transformative process from conforming to societal norms to questioning and redefining

them.

Interplay with Feminist Discourse: This act aligns with the feminist discourse on autonomy and self-expression, as discussed in works like Butler and Trouble's (1990), which emphasize the subversion of traditional gender identities. By choosing to remove their veils, Zohra and Sughra are not only making a statement about their personal freedom but are also engaging in a broader dialogue about female agency and empowerment.

Impact on Societal Perception: Unveiling disrupts the deeply ingrained beliefs about women in patriarchal societies. It challenges the established norms that dictate the appearance and behaviour expected of women, thus facilitating a reassessment of women's roles in both personal and societal contexts. This particular moment in the novel serves as a small-scale representation of the broader fight for gender equality, highlighting the intricate and subtle aspects of confronting institutionalised oppression.

Connection to Real-World Contexts: This narrative device resonates with real-world movements where the veil has been a central symbol in discussions about women's rights, particularly in Muslim societies. It echoes the sentiments of women who negotiate their identity and agency within the boundaries of cultural and religious expectations.

4.7 Passage 4: Excerpt from *The Heart Divided*

"Male characters like Habib often display a complex interplay of traditional and progressive views (Shahnawaz, 1957)."

4.7.1 Application of Predication Strategy

The depiction of male characters, specifically Habib, plays a crucial role in this passage. Habib personifies a fusion of conventional and innovative characteristics, a composition that starkly contrasts with the uniform portrayal of masculinity frequently observed in literature. His character is shaped not only by his conformity to cultural norms but also by his instances of forward-thinking. The presence of this duality is crucial when analysing and dismantling the conventional, simplistic depiction of male characters, particularly within a society deeply entrenched in patriarchy.

4.7.2 Expanded Analysis

The nuanced portrayal of Habib in *The Heart Divided* is a direct challenge to the binary understanding of gender roles that exists in many cultures. Habib's character oscillates between traditional values and more progressive, egalitarian views. This portrayal supports Unger's (1995) claim that gender roles and stereotypes are complex and multifaceted.

Furthermore, the character of Habib can be interpreted as a representation of the shifting social norms and perspectives concerning gender roles during the time period in which Shahnawaz produced his work. Particularly in the context of gender relations, his internal struggles and interactions with female characters provide a canvas on which to examine the tensions between modernity and tradition.

In addition, Habib's character defies the stereotype of male invincibility and emotional detachment, which is typically praised in patriarchal societies. The instances when he displays vulnerability and engages in introspection provide a critical assessment of the inflexible societal demands imposed on males, implying that genuine strength may reside in being flexible and emotionally receptive.

A comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics requires an appreciation of the complexity inherent in male characterization. It advocates for a more complex and humane representation of people, moving beyond the crude classification of people according to their gender. This method not only dispels preconceived notions but also makes room for more realistic and inclusive literary portrayals of people.

By presenting a character like Habib, Shahnawaz not only contributes to the discourse on gender roles but also invites readers to reconsider their own perceptions and biases regarding masculinity and femininity. This serves as a potent reminder of literature's power in shaping and reflecting societal norms and attitudes.

4.8 Zohra's Rejection of Arranged Marriage

Excerpt (Paraphrased)

Zohra confronts her parents when they propose a match for her. She questions the idea of marriage without love or mutual respect, asserting her right to choose her life partner.

Analysis

This scene employs argumentation (DHA) where Zohra logically disputes the cultural narrative that women should marry according to their family's decision. Her dialogue reflects an ideological struggle between tradition and autonomy. From a feminist discourse perspective (FCDA), Zohra's refusal is an act of linguistic subversion—she uses the same discursive space (family discussion) that is usually reserved for obedience to instead voice dissent. Her resistance challenges the gendered expectation of silent compliance, positioning her as a subject with agency rather than an object to be exchanged.

4.9 The Education Debate between Zohra and Her Father

Excerpt (Paraphrased)

Zohra's father, a traditionalist, argues that women's education is acceptable only if it prepares them for better domestic roles. Zohra argues that education should be about personal development and participation in society.

Analysis

Using predication (DHA), Zohra's father attributes traits like modesty, purity, and obedience to the ideal woman, justifying these through religious and cultural references (topoi of tradition). Zohra disrupts this by redefining education as a means of empowerment rather than conditioning. This is a discursive shift (FCDA), where she reclaims the meaning of education and reframes gender identity not as domestic but public and intellectual. Her challenge reveals the power asymmetry embedded in patriarchal discourse and her capacity to destabilize it from within.

4.10 Zohra's Political Engagement

Excerpt (Paraphrased)

Zohra joins political meetings and engages in discussions with male activists, voicing opinions on the Muslim League and women's roles in shaping the future of India.

Analysis

Here, nomination (DHA) is key Zohra is no longer labeled as just a daughter or potential bride, but as a political "worker," "intellectual," or "Muslim woman" with ideas. The shift

in naming reflects a broader shift in discursive positioning. Through FCDA, this is seen as a subversive act, placing a woman within a male-dominated political discourse. Her voice is not marginalized but central a deliberate act of gendered resistance. She redefines what it means to be a Muslim woman not in terms of modesty and loyalty to family, but through engagement with national ideology.

4.11 Zohra's Reflection on Women's Roles in Society

Excerpt (Paraphrased)

Zohra reflects internally: "Why must a woman's worth be measured by her silence and sacrifice?"

Analysis

This internal monologue represents interdiscursivity (DHA)—a moment where cultural, religious, and gender discourses collide. Zohra's questioning is a clear instance of ideological rupture. FCDA recognizes this as a key point of subversion, where the internalization of gender norms is met with critical resistance. The rhetorical question undermines the hegemonic script of femininity that equates virtue with silence and suffering.

4.12 Dialogue between Zohra and Elite Muslim Men

Excerpt (Paraphrased)

In political circles, Zohra is told to leave the serious matters to men. She responds sharply, "Isn't the nation our burden too?"

Analysis

This scene demonstrates exclusionary discourse being enacted against Zohra by men—where national duty is constructed as inherently masculine. Through argumentation and predication, men link competence with masculinity. Zohra's rebuttal challenges this link directly. Her use of inclusive language ("our burden") reflects solidarity-based discourse, asserting that national identity is not gender-exclusive. FCDA reads this as a direct challenge to patriarchal nationalism, exposing how even progressive political movements can exclude women under the guise of seriousness or propriety.

These examples reveal that subversion in *The Heart Divided* is not loud or radical in tone, but deeply embedded in the discourse and language used by the protagonist. Through critical engagement with social expectations, political ideologies, and family norms, Zohra and other female voices contest, reframe, and resist patriarchal values. By applying DHA and FCDA, this analysis uncovers how language becomes a site of struggle, and how Mumtaz Shahnawaz's narrative contributes to the feminist tradition of challenging sexist stereotypes in South Asian literature.

4.13 Examination of Positive and Negative Traits Assigned to Female Characters

In *The Heart Divided*, Mumtaz Shah Nawaz skillfully crafts her female characters with a rich tapestry of both positive and negative traits, providing a nuanced depiction of womanhood in the South Asian context. Zohra, one of the central characters, is portrayed with remarkable assertiveness and independence, traits that defy the conventional submissive image of women in South Asian societies. Her resilience and strength, particularly in the face of societal pressures, challenge the traditional norms and expectations imposed on women. This portrayal aligns with the observations by Deaux (2011) regarding the multifaceted nature of gender identities, suggesting that women's identities encompass a spectrum that includes both assertiveness and nurturing qualities.

Zohra's persona personifies a forward-thinking position, frequently participating in conversations and deeds that deviate from conventional expectations. For instance, her active engagement in public events and her unequivocal resistance against arranged marriages exemplify a substantial deviation from the conventional submissive role that has been ascribed to women. From her political activism, this facet of her character may be interpreted as a reflection of Nawaz's own progressive views and her advocacy for women's rights.

In contrast, Sughra's character initially conforms to the traditional roles expected of her, demonstrating traits such as passivity and compliance. This portrayal echoes Blum's (2004) discussion of how women are frequently restricted to rigid, predefined roles in patriarchal societies, limiting their opportunities for personal growth and self-expression. However, Sughra's character arc evolves throughout the story, reflecting the dynamic and

changing nature of women's roles in society. Her eventual transition to more assertive and independent behaviours represents not only personal development, but also a broader commentary on the changing roles of women in South Asian cultures.

The novel also depicts how society views women as being emotionally weak and reliant. This is clear from the way other characters treat the female characters and talk about them—often in an arrogant or defensive way. Researchers such as Unger (1995) have highlighted how deeply ingrained sexist stereotypes are in society and how these interactions both reflect and reinforce them. Unger emphasises the need to challenge these stereotypes in order to create more equitable gender relations.

The Heart Divided portrays its female characters as intricate and multifaceted, prompting the reader to reassess conventional concepts of femininity and womanhood. Nawaz's depiction of the favourable and unfavourable characteristics of her characters not only enhances the complexity of the story but also functions as a nuanced criticism of the inflexible societal expectations regarding gender roles. The intricate depiction of female characters enhances our comprehension of women's experiences and identities in South Asian societies, resulting in a more diverse and comprehensive understanding.

4.14 How These Traits Reflect and Subvert Traditional Sexist Stereotypes

Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* skillfully deviates from the simplistic dichotomy of positive and negative qualities in its depiction of Zohra and Sughra, thereby presenting a nuanced critique and subversion of conventional sexist stereotypes. In particular, Zohra's persona serves as a daring antithesis to the restrictive ideals of femininity that are pervasive in patriarchal societies of South Asia. The qualities of fortitude and self-assuredness that are traditionally associated with male protagonists are in opposition to her. The depiction not only presents a challenge to the reader's preconceived notions of femininity, but also transforms them, in line with Judith Butler's (1990) performative theory of gender. Butler argues that gender roles are not intrinsic or fixed; instead, they are products of continuous social discourse and behaviour, which in turn reshape and establish them. This concept is exemplified by Zohra's character, as her assertiveness and strength are not intrinsic qualities but rather are depicted as reactions to her social environment,

thus challenging conventional gender roles.

Furthermore, Sughra's character development from a traditionally passive role to a more assertive and independent position is an important narrative element that challenges long-held gender stereotypes. Initially, Sughra represents the archetypal submissive female role, conforming to societal norms. However, as the story progresses, her transformation becomes clear. This shift in her character is consistent with Michel's (1986) critique of the static binary logic of gender roles, which contends that gender identities are not fixed but can change and evolve. Nawaz's portrayal of Sughra thus not only challenges, but also subverts, the rigid gender roles that are prevalent in South Asian culture. Nawaz's character evolves and breaks free from the moulds of traditional femininity, articulating a powerful critique of societal structures that confine women to subordinate roles.

Nawaz's narrative approach in *The Heart Divided* is, at its core, a subversive act against the pervasive sexist stereotypes that exist in South Asian societies rather than just a depiction of characters. Nawaz uses Zohra and Sughra to create a story that simultaneously challenges and reflects the dominant gender norms. Through the lens of their characters, the reader is able to scrutinise and challenge conventional gender constructs, resulting in a more profound comprehension of the intricate relationship between personal identity and society norms. Thus, the novel serves as a vehicle for social commentary and critique in addition to narrative, providing a sophisticated examination of gender roles and how they affect women's lives in patriarchal societies.

4.15 Impact of These Traits on the Reader's Perception of the Characters and the Overall Narrative

Deepening the Reader's Insight: The depiction of female characters in Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* is multifaceted and goes beyond simple character development. It offers readers a deeper and more empathetic comprehension of the challenges women encounter in a patriarchal society. This portrayal of the character, which takes into account subtle and complex details, is consistent with Unger's (1995) argument about the significance of recognising unique variations within gender classifications. Nawaz's portrayal of female characters showcases a diverse range of qualities, prompting readers to acknowledge the distinctiveness and autonomy of women, which is frequently

eclipsed by rigid gender generalisations. This enhanced understanding promotes a shift away from perceiving female characters solely as representations of societal expectations, and instead recognises them as multifaceted individuals with their own aspirations, struggles, and strengths.

Critical Engagement with Gender Roles: Through a dynamic interplay that encourages readers to critically examine gender roles, Nawaz's narrative alternates between challenging and reinforcing traditional sexist stereotypes. According to Lazar (2000), this narrative technique successfully challenges and dissects social norms. The book challenges readers' preconceptions of what it means to be a man or a woman in South Asian culture. Nawaz not only shares the stories of characters like Zohra and Sughra, but also initiates a conversation about how social norms frequently limit and mould the lives of women. Readers can examine more general issues of gender inequality and empowerment through the characters' experiences overcoming various personal and social obstacles.

Social Commentary Through Narrative: Moreover, the intricate depiction of characters in *The Heart Divided* functions as a powerful social critique regarding the formation of feminine identity within South Asian cultures. Nawaz skillfully constructs a narrative that is simultaneously captivating and emblematic of the socio-cultural context that influences her characters. The novel serves as a vehicle through which not only personal narratives but also the shared struggle of women to navigate a society confined by inflexible gender norms are conveyed. This element of the novel reflects the feminist discourse, specifically concerning the capacity of literature to challenge and reflect upon societal norms (Butler, 1990).

A Confluence of Storytelling and Social Critique: Ultimately, *The Heart Divided* utilises a complex storytelling technique to intricately depict female characters, effectively both reflecting and challenging conventional sexist stereotypes. This approach not only enhances the narrative, but also stimulates a discussion on gender roles and stereotypes, making a substantial contribution to the discourse on gender dynamics. Nawaz's novel is notable not only for its literary value, but also for its insightful analysis and examination of the complex network of gender roles in South Asian society.

4.16 Detailed Examination of Explicit Predicates

Mumtaz Shah Nawaz skillfully utilises explicit predicates in *The Heart Divided* to construct and communicate the intricate realities of her female characters. Predicates play a crucial role in determining the positioning and perception of subjects within the narrative. For example, the utilisation of 'is' and 'are' frequently establishes characters firmly in their societal positions, whereas 'seems' and 'appears' introduce a subjective and perceptual aspect that is vital in comprehending the nuanced depiction of women in Nawaz's novel.

One notable example is Nawaz's description of Zohra: "Zohra is still in purdah" (Nawaz, 1990, p. 68). This simple predicate 'is' does more than just describe Zohra's physical state; it reveals much about her social environment, which is governed by traditions and cultural norms that limit a woman's visibility and mobility. It encompasses an entire system of societal control, echoing themes found in South Asian literature that explore the complexities and challenges faced by women in a traditionally patriarchal society (Karki, 2010).

In addition, predicates are utilised by Nawaz to emphasise contrasts between the internal and external realities of his characters. The use of the word 'seemed' in Nawaz's statement "Sughra appeared content" (p. 112) introduces ambiguity and implies that there may be a discrepancy between Sughra's demeanour and her internal emotions. By employing such nuanced language, the author encourages readers to delve deeper into the experiences and struggles of her characters, encouraging them to question and explore the surface.

4.17 Implicit Commentary Through Language

The predicates also provide implicit commentary on the societal expectations and norms that govern women's lives. For example, phrases such as "She is to be married off" or "She appears to be the ideal wife" not only describe the characters' situations, but also critically engage with the societal norms that shape them. This linguistic choice implicitly criticises the patriarchal system, which limits women to their roles as wives and daughters, depriving them of individual agency (Butler & Trouble, 1990).

In addition, Nawaz's use of predicates often reflects the transformation or growth

of characters over time. Early in the novel, characters might be described in terms that underscore their conformity to societal expectations. However, as the narrative progresses, the language evolves to reflect their growing awareness and resistance. This change can be traced through the shifting use of predicates, showcasing the characters' journeys from passivity to agency.

4.18 Contribution of Predicative Nouns, Adjectives, and Pronouns

The use of predicative nouns, adjectives, and pronouns in Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* plays a pivotal role in the complex portrayal of female characters, intricately weaving their personal narratives with the broader tapestry of societal expectations and cultural norms. Predicative nouns and adjectives often serve as a lens through which the internal and external conflicts of these characters are vividly brought to life. For instance, Nawaz's strategic use of adjectives like 'submissive' and 'rebellious' not only delineates the characters but also situates them within the larger societal framework. When a character like Sughra is described using terms such as 'submissive', it not only comments on her personality but also reflects the societal expectation of women in a patriarchal setting (Nawaz, 1990). In contrast, the use of 'rebellious' to describe characters like Zohra indicates a deviation from these norms, signifying a deeper internal conflict and a desire for autonomy (Karki, 2010). Such linguistic choices are instrumental in depicting the characters as dynamic individuals, caught between traditional roles and their quest for self-definition.

Furthermore, the novel deftly emphasises the agency and power dynamics of its characters through the strategic use of pronouns. According to Lazar (1993), the frequent use of "she" and "her" in passive constructions can obliquely imply a lack of agency or subjugation. Phrases such as "her life was decided" or "she was told" (Nawaz, 1990, p. 75) serve as examples of how external control is applied to female characters. On the other hand, when these pronouns are used in the active voice—"she decides," "she challenges"—the story is altered and emphasises instances of empowerment and resistance. In addition to enhancing character development, this nuanced language use reflects the broader feminist discourse that questions conventional gender roles (Butler & Trouble 1990). Additionally, the selection and repetition of certain predicative nouns throughout

the novel further reinforce the societal roles and expectations placed upon these women. Words like "mother," "daughter," "wife," and "sister" carry more cultural meanings and expectations than just being relational descriptors. The conflict between a person's identity and society expectations is highlighted by Nawaz's narrative, which frequently contrasts these roles with the characters' more independent goals (Perveen & Memon, 2020).

4.19 Examination of Collocations and Their Role in *The Heart Divided*

Detailed Analysis of Collocations and Their Implications: In Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided*, collocations, which refer to the habitual combinations of words, play a crucial role in either reinforcing or challenging well-established sexist stereotypes. Nawaz strategically employs these word pairings to provide a perspective through which the reader can perceive the intricate interaction between societal norms and individual character agency.

4.20 Adherence to Traditional Stereotypes

The novel contains collocations that conform to conventional conceptions of femininity that are deeply ingrained in South Asian culture. For example, Nawaz (1990, p. 102) uses expressions such as "quietly obedient" and "passively accepts" to not only depict the characters' outward conduct but also to subtly validate the societal norm regarding the submissiveness of women. These collocations reflect the more extensive cultural narratives in which women are frequently portrayed as submissive and accommodating within patriarchal systems in literature (Butler & Trouble, 1990). The linguistic selection can be interpreted as a representation of the established social conventions that the novel seeks to depict, establishing a foundation against which deviations and subversions emerge conspicuous and influential.

4.21 Subversion of Stereotypical Narratives

In contrast, Nawaz employs collocations to challenge and subvert traditional stereotypes. The novel uses strong language to support women's liberty and strength in a culturally constrictive environment. Phrases such as 'vocally opposes' or 'actively participates' stand in stark contrast to the passive stereotypes commonly associated with women in patriarchal societies. This language decision challenges the conventional

narratives that constrain women to subordinate roles and advances the characters' development while also acting as a kind of resistance to society gender conventions. This use of assertive language empowers her female characters while also acting as a form of resistance to societal gender norms (Jajja, 2012). Such collocations are essential for depicting the transformation or evolution of characters who, despite societal constraints, find ways to assert their autonomy and agency. Mumtaz Shahnawaz discreetly validates traditional standards regarding women's submissiveness in *The Heart Divided* to represent the characters' outward conduct. Shahnawaz draws attention to the way that women are frequently represented in literature as accommodating and submissive under patriarchal structures by using these collocations. Shahnawaz's language demonstrates how literature may mirror and uphold social norms by reflecting the larger cultural narratives that support and uphold gender roles and expectations.

4.22 Reflecting Societal Tensions and Transition

In addition to being a literary device, this dualistic approach to collocations reflects societal tensions and shifts in gender roles. The conflicting collocations reflect the difficulties and tensions that women experience in a traditional-rooted society that is also subject to contemporary influences and transformations. They capture the inner struggles of the characters as they negotiate these social norms, occasionally complying with them and other times rejecting them (Lazar, 2000). An example of this tension and change is Zohra's path from "boldly challenging" the idea of an arranged marriage to "silently enduring" her family's expectations. Another figure illustrates the dynamic and frequently conflicting nature of women's roles in a changing society by first being described as "dutifully following" social conventions but then moving to "fiercely advocating" for her own decisions. These collocations act as a reflection of the changing cultural environment, as new ideas collide with traditional practices to provide a battlefield for autonomy and identity.

4.23 Collocations as a Window into Character Development

Furthermore, these collocations offer insights into the characters' development throughout the novel. For instance, a character initially described with phrases like 'silently endures' might evolve into one who 'boldly challenges', signifying a journey from

acceptance of societal norms to active resistance against them. This progression illustrates how characters deal with and ultimately overcome the limitations placed on them by a patriarchal culture, and it also speaks to a deeper story of personal development and empowerment. Thus, such evolution in the use of collocations mirrors the characters' growth and their increasing willingness to challenge the status quo (Reisigl, 2017). The novel shows how people who are initially constrained by society expectations have the capacity to oppose and change through this linguistic evolution.

4.24 Instances Challenging Traditional Gender Roles in *The Heart Divided*

Defiance of Arranged Marriage: *The Heart Divided* by Mumtaz Shahnawaz offers a compelling account that questions entrenched gender norms within the specific cultural milieu of South Asia, particularly through the theme of arranged marriage. This defiance is exemplified by the character of Zohra, who navigates the challenges and societal pressures associated with resisting an arranged marriage. Through Zohra's experiences, the novel highlights the struggles and complexities faced by women who attempt to assert their autonomy and challenge traditional expectations. Zohra's story serves as a poignant illustration of the broader societal conflict between individual desires and collective norms. Her unequivocal refusal to participate in an arranged marriage serves as a courageous act of rebellion against conventional customs (Nawaz, 1990). This decision holds great importance, considering the societal context of the novel, in which arranged marriages were not only prevalent but also a fundamental aspect of a woman's societal and familial obligations. Zohra's decision to refuse this course of action not only challenges the conventional customs of marriage but also affirms her independence in making significant personal choices.

Zohra's Quest for Educational and Personal Growth: Furthermore, Zohra's character is defined not only by her refusal of an arranged marriage, but also by her desire for education and intellectual growth as evident from the collocation, “passionately pursues knowledge”. In a society where women's education was frequently deemed unnecessary, Zohra's determination to pursue her academic interests represents a significant challenge to traditional gender roles that limited women to domestic spheres. This aspect of her

character is consistent with the shifting tides in South Asian society at the time, highlighting a growing recognition of women's rights to education and personal development.

Sughra's Political Engagement: Conversely, Sughra's persona, despite initially adhering to conventional norms via matrimony, inevitably undertakes a transformative odyssey of introspection and empowerment. The novel by Nawaz portrays her active participation in the political struggles of the Muslim League, which serves as a poignant illustration of women transcending their traditional domestic responsibilities and engaging in public and political affairs (Nawaz, 1990). Sughra's metamorphosis from a housewife to a political activist symbolises not only her individual development but also the evolving position of women in a society undergoing substantial political and social transformations.

Symbolism of the Veil: The significance of the veil in *The Heart Divided* reinforces the defiance against conventional gender norms. The narrative directly addresses the practice of veiling, which is deeply rooted in the culture as a symbol of modesty and submission. The novel delves into the examination of both the literal and metaphorical act of unveiling, symbolising the defiance against the enforced invisibility and silence imposed upon women. This action symbolises the liberation of women from the constraints of patriarchal norms, reflecting the overarching themes of liberation and resistance that are present throughout the novel.

4.25 How the Author Uses Language to Subvert Stereotypes

Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's use of language in *The Heart Divided* is a powerful tool in challenging and subverting entrenched sexist stereotypes. Her narrative style is not merely a vehicle for storytelling; it is an instrument of empowerment and a mirror reflecting the complex inner worlds of her female characters.

Empowering Female Voices through Narrative Style: Nawaz's utilisation of internal monologues, in particular, as a narrative technique, offers profound insights into the thoughts and emotions of her female characters. By adopting this methodology, readers are granted access to the characters' deepest thoughts and emotions, which serves to humanise them and elevates their narratives beyond being mere devices for the plot. As an illustration, the internal monologues of Sughra provide a poignant critique of the meaninglessness of her matrimonial union and the oppressive limitations imposed on

Muslim women by conventional gender roles (Nawaz, 1990). This introspective process not only cultivates empathy but also questions established societal conventions by offering a viewpoint that is frequently suppressed within South Asian communities. Nawaz adeptly employs this narrative technique to empower those who lack a voice, allowing her characters to express their aspirations and viewpoints, which frequently confront established societal norms.

Dialogues as a Vehicle for Challenging Patriarchy: The dialogues in *The Heart Divided* are more than just verbal sparring; they're arenas for the contestation of conventional patriarchal viewpoints. One example is the discussion Zohra had with her father regarding her involvement in a public debate, "I tell you Zohra that if you continue to behave like this, I shall regret having brought you out of Purdah." (Pg. 308). The purdah system, a representation of women's subjugation and marginalisation in public life, is directly challenged by Zohra's call for participation in a public, intellectual forum (Nawaz, 1990). This is a clever use of dialogue by Nawaz, as it highlights Zohra's tenacity and will to overcome these constraints while also exposing the patriarchal system. This exchange turns into a microcosm of the greater struggle in society that women face on a daily basis—the struggle for autonomy and space.

Language as a Reflection of Social Change: Nawaz's linguistic choices in the novel are reflective of the broader social changes occurring during the time. The narrative oscillates between traditional norms and the burgeoning desire for change, mirroring the tumultuous era of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent. Shahnawaz has blessed Zohra's character with confident feminist dialogues that empower her female role, for example, "I need to be there for the conference. It's important for our future." By giving her female characters, a voice that is both assertive and introspective, Nawaz challenges the monolithic portrayal of women as passive recipients of their fate. This narrative choice is a deliberate subversion of the stereotype that portrays women as compliant and unresisting in the face of patriarchal oppression.

Reinforcing and Subverting Stereotypes: It is noteworthy that Nawaz's narrative does not completely reject conventional roles and stereotypes; rather, it intricately interlaces them into the lives of her characters, ultimately undermining them. To illustrate,

although Sughra initially personifies the archetype of a conventional Muslim woman, her progression through the novel forces her to question and subvert these very standards. The intricate nature of the opposition to deeply ingrained gender roles is emphasised in this nuanced depiction, which implies that subversion frequently originates from within established conventions.

4.26 The Impact of Subversions on Narrative and Themes in *The Heart Divided*

Deepening the Narrative Structure: Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* brings about a significant transformation in the narrative by subverting sexist stereotypes. This subversion adds a layer of intricacy that disrupts the traditional storytelling found in South Asian literature. Nawaz deviates from the conventional narrative structure by depicting women as complex individuals who challenge societal expectations, thus breaking away from the tendency to limit female characters to stereotypical roles. This narrative decision goes beyond character development; it represents a broader transformation in the cultural narrative. In accordance with Judith Butler's viewpoint, Nawaz employs the strategy of undermining traditional gender roles as a means of opposing societal norms, implying that identity is not a fixed notion but rather a constantly evolving one (Butler, 1990). Nawaz's narrative serves as a means to scrutinise and challenge the traditional roles of women, especially within a society experiencing swift transformation.

Beyond Personal Struggles: Broader Social Commentary: *The Heart Divided* transcends the internal conflicts and hardships experienced by its characters by delving into a more extensive social critique within its thematic framework. Nawaz's portrayal of female resistance serves as a critical commentary on the patriarchal structures that govern society, in addition to being a narrative device. This particular element of her story corresponds with Lazar's conceptualization of gender dynamics, implying a transition towards fairer and more egalitarian social frameworks (Lazar, 1993). Nawaz's novel thus extends beyond the domain of individual narratives to participate in a more extensive dialogue concerning gender expectations and cultural conventions in South Asia.

Subversion as a Reflection of Societal Change: Nawaz's approach to subverting

gender stereotypes in her novel reflects broader societal changes at the time. The novel, set against the backdrop of India's Partition and the establishment of Pakistan, reflects the tumultuous changes in societal structures and norms. The female characters' acts of defiance and assertion of identity mirror the larger narrative of a society in the process of redefining itself. In this context, the novel becomes more than just a literary work; it also serves as a historical document, capturing the zeitgeist of its time.

The Role of Language in Subversion: The language used in *The Heart Divided* plays a crucial role in the subversion of sexist stereotypes. Nawaz skillfully employs language to give depth and autonomy to her female characters, allowing them to articulate their desires and dissent against societal norms. This use of language not only empowers the characters within the narrative but also challenges the readers to reconsider their own perceptions of gender roles.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This thesis has undertaken an extensive scholarly exploration to dissect the complex gender dynamics and the systematic subversion of sexist stereotypes as portrayed in Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's seminal work, *The Heart Divided*. Central to this academic inquiry has been the meticulous application of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), a methodological framework that facilitates a deep understanding of the interplay between language, power, and societal norms. Within *The Heart Divided*, Nawaz skillfully constructs a narrative tapestry that mirrors the intricate complexities of women's existence in South Asia, specifically amidst the critical historical juncture of the Partition. The thesis has shed light on the manner in which Nawaz surpasses the traditional representation of women in South Asian literature by virtue of her skillful use of narrative. Rather than limiting her female characters to conventional archetypes, Nawaz imbues them with intricacy and profundity, depicting them as individuals who contend with and ultimately surpass the societal expectations placed upon them. This study, utilizing the DHA, has effectively demonstrated how Nawaz's narrative goes beyond simply recounting the lives of its characters. Instead, it actively challenges and deconstructs the deeply ingrained sexist stereotypes that are prevalent in South Asian society. By critiquing the rigid gender norms and societal constructs that have historically limited the roles and identities of women, Nawaz's novel emerges as a courageous examination of these issues. Particularly noteworthy is the novel's engagement with societal norms during the Partition era, which distinguishes *The Heart Divided* as a work that not only tells a story but also prompts a reassessment of long-standing gender biases.

Zohra, a central figure in Nawaz's narrative, is portrayed as a beacon of defiance and self-determination. Her refusal to succumb to an arranged marriage and her pursuit of education and political engagement stand as potent symbols of resistance against the patriarchal norms of her society. Her character arc vividly illustrates a journey from the traditional expectations of submissiveness and docility to a realm of empowerment and self-advocacy. The character development of Sughra is similarly noteworthy. Originally shown as a traditional subservient and obedient wife, her character undergoes a progressive

transformation, demonstrating an increasing awareness and assertiveness. Her entrance into the male-dominated political sphere represents a departure from the limitations of family life and a shift towards active involvement in public and political affairs, reflecting the wider feminist fight for acknowledgement and equal rights.

The linguistic devices employed by Nawaz in *The Heart Divided* serve as a window into the societal norms governing gender roles. Predicative nouns and adjectives such as 'submissive', 'obedient', and 'docile' initially frame the characters within the traditional feminine archetype. However, as the narrative progresses, the emergence of terms like 'assertive', 'resilient', and 'independent' signify a departure from these norms and a redefinition of their identities. The strategic use of collocations such as 'quietly submissive' and 'boldly challenges' successfully contrasts women's societal expectations with their acts that contradict these standards. This contrast emphasizes not only the cultural constraints placed on these people, but also their personal difficulties and accomplishments in overcoming them. The language choices employed in the narrative structure play a crucial role in presenting Zohra and Sughra as characters who undergo growth and change. By examining their conversations and internal thoughts, the reader is able to gain a deeper understanding of their internal struggles and dreams, going beyond the conventional depiction of women as mere reflections of societal norms. This approach enriches the reader's comprehension of their complex personalities, fostering a stronger emotional bond with their challenges and triumphs.

Mumtaz Shah Nawaz explores the age-old custom of arranged marriages in *The Heart Divided*, shedding light on its significance within South Asian society. Rather than merely depicting these unions as customary or social practices, the novel emphasizes the conflicts that arise when personal aspirations collide with societal norms. Through the portrayal of characters like Zohra, who grapple with their inner turmoil and resistance towards arranged marriages, Nawaz effectively critiques this tradition, presenting it as a symbol of women's limited agency and suppression of their choices. The narrative of Nawaz also emphasizes the value of education as a means of empowerment and independence. During a time when women's education was frequently marginalized, the novel's heroines who strive for knowledge and intellectual development represent a liberation from the bonds of ignorance and reliance. By emphasizing education as a route

to greater horizons of freedom and self-reliance, it contradicts the historical narrative that largely restricted women to the home. The narrative fearlessly explores the domain of women's political involvement, a sphere historically controlled by men. Nawaz challenges the image of politically passive women by portraying female characters who actively engage in political activities. Additionally, Nawaz repositions these women as influential figures in creating their society. This depiction signifies a notable deviation from the traditional depiction of women in South Asian literature and stands as evidence of the changing role of women in the political and public domains.

The act of unveiling in *The Heart Divided* transcends its literal meaning, evolving into a powerful metaphor for the defiance against patriarchal control. The veil, often seen as a symbol of modesty and submission within many South Asian cultures, is reinterpreted in the novel as a barrier to women's visibility and voice. The removal of the veil thus becomes an act of rebellion, symbolizing the rejection of imposed invisibility and the assertion of self-identity. The novel reaches a significant point with the symbolic unveiling, which holds great emotional weight. This moment signifies a pivotal milestone in breaking free from the limitations imposed by patriarchal norms. It visually and metaphorically portrays the characters shedding societal expectations and embracing their own autonomy. By taking this action, the characters assert their existence and question the traditional norms that have governed their roles and visibility in society for a considerable time. The unveiling acts as a driving force for the characters' path towards empowerment, signifying the start of their transformation from passive followers of societal expectations to engaged individuals who question and reshape these expectations. This act of rebellion not only frees them from the confines of the veil but also symbolizes their liberation from the oppressive forces that have kept them in the background, allowing them to step into the spotlight of self-assertion and acknowledgment from society.

The Heart Divided transcends the realm of personal struggles and individual character arcs, embedding itself into the larger societal discourse on gender expectations and cultural norms. This narrative extension is not merely a recounting of experiences but an invitation for readers to delve into a reflective examination of their own societal constructs. Through the journey of its characters, the novel provokes critical thought regarding the rigid gender roles deeply ingrained in South Asian societies. Nawaz's novel

assumes a crucial function in stimulating readers to interrogate and scrutinize entrenched gender norms. The novel pushes readers to confront and reevaluate conventional gender categories, compelling them to contemplate the flexibility and subjectivity of these roles. This holds particular significance within the framework of South Asian countries, where conventional gender norms have been firmly maintained with strict inflexibility. The novel's depiction of its female characters, including their dreams, challenges, and eventual empowerment, acts as a catalyst for transforming readers' perspectives. Through the portrayal of characters who defy conventional norms, Nawaz successfully prompts readers to reassess their perception of gender roles, ultimately influencing society on a larger scale.

Through the examination of *The Heart Divided*, it becomes evident that literature possesses a remarkable ability to bring about transformation within society. Nawaz's novel serves as a compelling case study, shedding light on the intricate relationship between gender dynamics, cultural contexts, and literary expression. It exemplifies how literature can transcend its role as a mere narrative device and instead become a potent instrument for questioning and reshaping societal conventions. The novel serves as an illuminating example of how narrative fiction can reflect and shape societal attitudes towards gender roles. By intricately weaving the personal with the societal, Nawaz's narrative provides valuable insights into the cultural dynamics that shape gender perceptions and roles. This is particularly relevant in the context of South Asian literature, where exploration of such themes can contribute to a broader understanding of cultural and societal transformations. Literary studies as a field, Nawaz's contributions to the discourse on gender equality and empowerment are substantial. By delving into subjects including arranged marriages, women's education, and political engagement, the novel offers a nuanced comprehension of the complexities and successes that comprise the path to gender equality. This serves as evidence of the capacity of literature to promote social transformation, specifically with regard to gender relations. The findings of this thesis also promote interdisciplinary study that connects literature, gender studies, and cultural analysis. *The Heart Divided* provides a rich story that can be examined from a variety of academic viewpoints, providing a thorough grasp of the cultural impact of literary works on gender attitudes and roles.

Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* stands as a powerful testament to the potential of literature to serve as more than just a form of entertainment. It transcends

traditional narrative boundaries to become a tool for social critique, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of gender roles within a patriarchal framework. Nawaz's adept use of linguistic strategies and narrative techniques enables her to weave a story that is as captivating as it is enlightening, illuminating the complexities of female identity within the specific cultural context of South Asia. Nawaz questions the deeply ingrained characteristics of female identity in a patriarchal society with her powerful character portrayals and deft narrative design. Her book bravely challenges ingrained conventions and prejudices while promoting empowerment and change. By doing this, it communicates to a global audience as well as the women of South Asia, reiterating the fight for gender equality and the redefining of gender roles.

The Heart Divided holds a significant place in the canon of South Asian feminist literature. It serves as both a mirror and a window - a mirror reflecting the complex emotional and psychological landscapes of its female characters, and a window offering insights into the societal transformations of its time. Nawaz's narrative captures the essence of an era marked by both turmoil and transformation, providing a nuanced perspective on the evolving roles of women in South Asian cultures. Nawaz's novel stands as an exceptional literary accomplishment, while also serving as a significant addition to the ongoing conversation surrounding gender dynamics. Through her work, Nawaz urges readers to contemplate the intricate challenges women encounter in their pursuit of independence and empowerment. The narrative deeply resonates with themes of resistance, resilience, and the reclamation of one's identity, leaving a profound imprint on both the literary realm and societal perspectives on gender.

Despite being set during the Partition, *The Heart Divided* continues to captivate modern audiences, leaving a lasting impact. Its ability to resonate lies in its exploration of themes like gender equality, empowerment, and societal change, which remain relevant today. The novel's depiction of ongoing struggles and aspirations in various societies echoes the challenges we still face. Nawaz's novel serves as a catalyst for subsequent literary and scholastic dialogues, motivating scholars and authors to examine and contest established gender narratives. This facilitates the emergence of additional narratives that not only mirror the actualities of society but also have the capacity to revolutionize it. *The Heart Divided* functions as a powerful catalyst, compelling individuals and society as a

whole to recognize and confront the enduring challenges of gender inequality. It passionately advocates for empowerment and parity, imprinting an enduring impression on the realm of feminist literature and guiding forthcoming generations in their pursuit of a fairer and more just society. In brief, *The Heart Divided* by Mumtaz Shah Nawaz is a magnum opus of feminist literature from South Asia, deftly merging narrative art with social critique. This piece of literature presents a thought-provoking examination of the changing roles and identities of women in society, challenging established gender norms. Nawaz's novel serves as a seminal contribution to the realm of literature and a thought-provoking participant in the ongoing dialogue concerning gender relations, empowerment, and equality.

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