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Beyond Borders: Patriarchal Oppression and Female Resistance in the Short Stories of Kate Chopin and Qaisra Shahraz

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Abstract
This study presents a comparative feminist analysis of Kate Chopin's A Pair of Silk Stockings and Qaisra Shahraz's A Pair of Jeans through the theoretical framework of Simone de Beauvoir. It examines how both texts portray different forms of women's oppression and resistance within patriarchal societies despite their distinct historical and cultural settings. The study adopts a qualitative textual analysis to explore the themes of economic, emotional, social, patriarchal, socio-moral, and cultural oppression, drawing on Beauvoir's concepts of the Other, immanence, transcendence, and gender socialization. The analysis reveals that both protagonists are initially confined by patriarchal structures that deny them subjectivity and reduce them to traditional gender roles. However, each character resists these constraints in different ways. Mrs. Sommers' seemingly ordinary acts of self-indulgence become a silent assertion of individuality, while Mariam openly challenges the cultural and moral judgments imposed upon her. Although their forms of resistance differ in intensity and expression, both narratives emphasize women's struggle to reclaim autonomy and redefine their identities beyond socially constructed expectations. The study concludes that Beauvoir's feminist philosophy provides an effective framework for understanding how literature exposes gender oppression while presenting resistance as a movement from immanence toward transcendence. By comparing these two texts, the study highlights the continuity of patriarchal control across different cultures and demonstrates that the pursuit of female subjectivity and freedom remains a universal concern in feminist literature.
Keywords: oppression, resistance, otherness, immanence, transcendence.

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1. Introduction

Literature has long been recognized as a reflection of human life and society, offering insight into the social, political, cultural, and ideological realities of different historical periods (Ramzan et al., 2020, 2025). Through novels, short stories, poetry, and drama, writers not only portray human experiences but also expose inequalities, injustices, and structures of power that shape individual and collective lives (Abdelrady et al., 2025, 2026). Among the recurring concerns in literary studies, the representation of women in patriarchal societies occupies a central place. Literary texts depict women's lived experiences while simultaneously questioning traditional gender roles and advocating for women's rights, autonomy, identity, and self-expression. As feminist literary critics argue, literature functions both as a mirror of society and as a powerful medium for challenging and transforming patriarchal ideologies that sustain gender inequality (Beauvoir, 1949; Showalter, 1977).

Throughout history, women across both Eastern and Western societies have struggled to secure fundamental rights, including access to education (Akram et al., 2021, 2022, 2026; Ma et al., 2024, 2026), freedom of expression, economic independence, and the authority to make decisions about their own lives. These struggles have found significant expression in literature, where female characters frequently confront and resist restrictions imposed by patriarchal institutions such as family, marriage, religion, and culture (Ramzan et al., 2023, 2024). Feminist writers have consistently foregrounded women's experiences of marginalization and oppression while emphasizing their resilience, self-awareness, and pursuit of equality and selfhood. Consequently, feminist literature has emerged as an influential platform for articulating women's voices, questioning gender-based

discrimination, and advocating social transformation (Wollstonecraft, 1792; Hooks, 2000).

The portrayal of women in literature has undergone a significant transformation over time. Earlier literary works often represented women as passive, obedient, and dependent upon male authority, reinforcing conventional gender expectations. In contrast, modern and contemporary literature increasingly presents female characters as independent individuals who question social conventions and resist patriarchal domination (Ramzan & Khan, 2024a, 2024b). Such works explore issues including gender inequality, identity, marriage, sexuality, cultural expectations, and women's agency, thereby making important contributions to feminist literary discourse and expanding discussions surrounding women's empowerment.

Against this background, the present study undertakes a comparative analysis of two selected short stories written by prominent women writers from different cultural contexts: *A Pair of Jeans* by Qaisra Shahraz and *A Pair of Silk Stockings* by Kate Chopin. Although separated by geography, history, and culture, both writers explore women's experiences within patriarchal societies and portray their struggles for identity, dignity, autonomy, and freedom. Examining these texts comparatively provides an opportunity to understand how similar concerns about gender oppression are expressed through distinct cultural and historical settings.

Kate Chopin (1850–1904) was an American novelist and short-story writer whose works are widely regarded as foundational texts in feminist literature. Widowed at the age of thirty-two and left to raise six children, her personal experiences profoundly influenced her understanding of women's emotional, social, and psychological realities. Her fiction explores women's inner consciousness, marital dissatisfaction, sexual autonomy, and the limitations imposed by nineteenth-century American society. Through works such as *The Story of an Hour*, *A Pair*

of Silk Stockings, and *The Awakening*, Chopin challenged dominant ideals of femininity and anticipated many of the concerns later developed within twentieth-century feminist thought.

Similarly, Qaisra Shahraz is a British-Pakistani novelist and short-story writer whose fiction examines the complex experiences of Muslim women negotiating between Eastern traditions and Western modernity. Her writings address issues of cultural identity, gender discrimination, marriage, honour, religious expectations, migration, and women's self-realization. Shahraz has gained international recognition for her contribution to literature and women's empowerment, including being named among the fifty most influential women in Manchester. Her notable works include *The Holy Woman*, *Revolt*, and *A Pair of Jeans and Other Stories*. Through realistic portrayals of women's lives, Shahraz highlights the social and cultural constraints imposed upon women while emphasizing their resilience, resistance, and determination to assert their identities.

Although Kate Chopin and Qaisra Shahraz belong to different historical periods and cultural traditions, both the writers foreground women's resistance to patriarchal structures and expose the social, cultural, and ideological mechanisms that restrict female autonomy. Their female protagonists challenge oppressive norms, negotiate personal and cultural identities, and seek dignity and self-determination within societies shaped by patriarchal values. Despite the differences in their socio-cultural contexts, their works reveal the persistence of gender inequality and the universal desire of women to exercise agency over their own lives.

Therefore, this study investigates women's resistance to patriarchal oppression through a comparative analysis of *A Pair of Jeans* and *A Pair of Silk Stockings*. It examines how Qaisra Shahraz and Kate Chopin represent women's

struggles for identity, freedom, and self-determination, while highlighting the similarities and differences in their portrayal of female resistance across diverse socio-cultural contexts. The study also seeks to contribute to feminist literary scholarship by demonstrating how literature serves as a critical space for questioning patriarchal power and envisioning women's empowerment.

1.1. Objectives of the study

This study aims to achieve the following objectives through the analysis of selected short stories:

- To analyze different forms of oppression faced by protagonists in the selected short stories
- To investigate the manifestation of resistance and achievement of existential transcendence by the protagonists.

1.2. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology because it seeks to explore the emotional experiences, perceptions, and struggles of the female characters represented in the selected short stories. As the research focuses on complex human experiences such as oppression, resistance, identity, and self-determination, a qualitative approach is considered the most appropriate (Parveen & Akram, 2021). It enables an in-depth interpretation of literary texts by examining characters' emotions, actions, and interactions within their socio-cultural contexts. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2016), qualitative research is particularly suitable for investigating meanings, experiences, and social realities through detailed textual interpretation.

The study is theoretically grounded in Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialist theory, articulated in *The Second Sex* (1949). Beauvoir's theoretical framework provides an effective lens for examining the patriarchal structures that shape women's lives and restrict their freedom, identity, and autonomy. Since this

research undertakes a comparative analysis of two short stories from different cultural contexts, Beauvoir's concepts offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the ways in which women experience oppression while simultaneously resisting patriarchal domination and asserting their agency.

For textual analysis, the study employs four central concepts derived from Beauvoir's theory: Otherness, Socialization, Immanence, and Transcendence. These concepts serve as the primary analytical categories for examining the selected texts. Furthermore, the research utilizes close reading and textual analysis as its principal analytical methods to identify, interpret, and analyze significant passages, dialogues, and narrative descriptions that illustrate women's experiences of patriarchal oppression and their resistance to it. Through this interpretive approach, the study aims to provide a critical understanding of how both writers portray women's struggle for identity, freedom, and self-determination within distinct socio-cultural settings.

2. Analysis of Short Stories

This section qualitatively analyses the selected two short stories: *A Pair of Jeans* by Qaisra Shahraz and *A Pair of Silk Stockings* by Kate Chopin respectively. It takes the relevant lines and quotes from the primary source and analyses through the lens of feminist literary theory, proposed by Simon de Beauvoir’s, focusing on its developed concepts.

2.1. A Pair of Silk Stockings

While analyzing the short story *A Pair of Silk Stockings* one can come across different types of oppression women faced in 19th century. Among them one prominent form of oppression is economic oppression. Economic oppression refers to the systematic practices that prevent certain individuals or groups from achieving economic equality. It feels like a trap in which people lose their individuality, become dependent on others for their basic needs, and try to survive

only rather to live. In 19th century women were badly suffering from economic oppression.

"Little Mrs. Sommer one day finds herself the unexpected possessor of fifteen Dollars." This sentence clearly represents the poor economic situation of Mrs. Sommer. Fifteen dollars is not such a huge amount but still it seems a miracle to her. In 19th century patriarchal society financial dependency over men was a great cause of women oppression (Umar et al., 2024a, 2024b). Within the framework of Simone De Beauvoir Mrs. summer is in the state of immanence. She has been confined to her domestic roles. She has been the Other, who always look towards her husband for necessities of life. Fifteen dollars provided a material basis for transcendence due to which Mrs. summer found temporary escape from her exhausting routine.

"Who could stand for hours making her way inch by inch toward the desired object that was selling below cost?" similarly, this sentence also shows the poor financial condition of Mrs. Sommer where she was compelled to stand in lines for hours just to save a penny. This is the strong evidence of Mrs. Summer's economic oppression because her time is valueless, the only valuable thing is the money she saves. Within the framework of Simone De Beauvoir, she has stuck in crowd and making her way inch by inch towards something less meaningful and immanent instead of trying to achieve great goals and become successful.

"It was a long time since Mrs. Sommer has been fitted with gloves." In 19th century gloves were considered to be the sign of social status and nobility. The fact that she has not been 'fitted' in years shows her economic deprivation, how she has abandoned her desires for the sake of her family. Within Beauvoir's framework 'A woman is not born but made' Mrs. Sommer has made a woman who did not deserve to wear gloves. Her hands are only for immanent things like cooking, mending, and sewing.

2.1.1. Emotional Oppression

Emotional oppression refers to the suppression of individual desires feelings and emotions. In this context emotional oppression is the psychological state where the protagonist is constantly sacrificing herself for the sake of family. Mrs. Sommer is twenty-four hours working woman. She has become numb who don't want to remember who she was, what were her dreams and ambitions in her life. In emotionally oppressed situations a woman always wants to live her peacefully by remaining silent. Mostly a happy home is made through women silence. In story the situation of Mrs. Sommer is the same she is prioritizing her family over herself and never complains because she didn't want to spoil the peace of her home. Although she is fighting silent battles about her own identity but in home, she is absolutely a perfect mother. Over time emotional oppression make a female lose her individuality.

"She had no time- no second of time to devote to the past." Here the author is talking about how busy and tiring routine Mrs. Sommer has. Her life has become so demanding that she can't even remember her identity. Her environment forces her to stay insensitive by denying her the time to remember her better days, as by remembering her past she might rebel against present situation. From Simone de Beauvoir theoretical framework Mrs. Sommer is stuck in the repetitive cycle of doing house chores and taking care of children. She is trapped in this state of immanence that's why she has no time for her past. Mrs. Sommer is not the subject who has her own dreams and visions rather she has become the other. Her identity is only defined by how she serves her family.

"A vision of the future like some dim, gaunt monster sometimes appealed her, but luckily tomorrow never comes."

This sentence describes the psychological paralysis that keep a woman trapped. She wants to imagine a luxurious life for herself but the life she is living

and the responsibilities she had only allow her to see more years of poverty and suppression. Generally, future represents hope and change but for Mrs. Sommer it is like a gaunt monster. From the lens of Beauvoir, it is the denial of transcendence. She is stuck in immanence where future would be a repetitive cycle of survival just as present. She is the other and being treated by the world as an object. This emotional suppression is so successful that she now views her loss of future as a form of luck.

"She could not realize that they belong to her and were a part of herself." This sentence shows that she has spent all her life prioritizing others over herself. She cannot even accept that something beautiful could belong to her. Emotional oppression makes people numb. Same is the case with Mrs. Sommer. Beauvoir argues that women are taught to see themselves through the eyes of others. Mrs. Sommer sees her body as something that belongs to her role not belong to her own self. When she put the silk stockings in, she thinks the legs belong to some lady in magazine not to herself. She is even the other in her own eyes.

2.1.2. Social Oppression

Generally, social oppression is the process by which a dominant group limits access to resources, status and power among subordinate's groups. Unlike emotional oppression, social oppression is the external cage built by society around people. Within *A Pair of Silk Stockings*, this oppression acts as an invisible trap that confines women to domestic labor and poverty. During the era the story was written, was the era of pressure of selfless motherhood. A mother was expected to sacrifice her entire life for the sake of her family. Spending money on her own needs was considered to be a sin. This expectation forms a psychological prison, making women even feel guilty for the basic human desires.

"It seemed to her a very large amount of money and the way in which it is stuffed and bulged her worn old port monnaie gave her a feeling of importance such as she had not enjoyed for years."

The first part of the sentence represents economic marginalization. In 19th century society has socialized women to live in a world of pennies. They were prohibited to do any high paying jobs and gain financial independence. According to Simon women have been socialized to accept the state of immanence. The fact that fifteen dollars seems a great amount to her shows that society has bounded her. The second part of the sentence shows the social hierarchy. Society respects only those with status and wealth while poorly neglect people like Mrs. Summer. Society treated Mrs. Sommer as in-essential and secondary. Beauvoir argues that a woman has socialized to be the other which ignores her individuality.

"She did not wish to act hastily; to do anything she might afterward regret." This sentence highlights the fear of judgmental society. Mrs. Sommer hesitates because she has been socialized to believe that no money should be spend on her own needs. Her one and only responsibility is to take care of her family. Beauvoir argues that women are taught to view their selves as objects who survive only for others, not as subject who has their own dreams and visions. She did not wish to act hastily because she is already predicting that how society will judge her after buying something for herself. This fits Beauvoir's idea of the other, even if she is alone and possess her own money, she cannot be simply herself.

"The neighbor sometimes talked of certain better days that little Mrs. Sommer had known before she had ever thought of being Mrs. Sommer."

This sentence shows that how society label women and then trap them in that label. Society has taken her identity as an individual. Beauvoir explains that society has socialized women to be a relative being. They are known in society by their husband's name or any other relationship to men. Society calls her little Mrs.

Sommer. It's not about her age or height but such names even make her more fragile and delicate. According to the theory of socialization, women are socialized to be calm and silent. By calling her little they are actually defining her status that she is not someone independent but a little twenty-four seven working housewife. The neighbors talk about her better days behind her back, which shows she is constantly being judged and watch by society.

"She has no time a second of time to devote to the past."

This line shows that a woman's time is totally consumed through social oppression in patriarchal society. Society expects a mother to give her 100 percent but not receive 1 percent. Society has decided that a mother must spend her every second thinking about her kids and family. Society has taken away her identity as an individual.

2.1.3. Resistance

Resistance in this story is not so prominent and loud. It is only the realization of oneself. It is an internal, silent, and physical rebellion against the stereotypical role of mother. The story shows a world where poverty and societal expectations has completely trapped the protagonist, due to which she has lost her individuality. Society demand that a woman should remain in state of immanence, while ignoring her body and material needs. Her only responsibility is to serve family. This resistance is a silent rebellion against this social concept of motherhood.

"Well, I will take this pair." This is the exact second where she chooses to be herself. In past years she has been prioritizing her children over her own self. By saying I will take this pair she is not examining the quality or texture but making a choice entirely based on her own will. This is a rebellion against the typical role of mother. She has stopped acting like a sacrificial mother and have now become an individual woman. From Beauvoir's perspective, this sentence shows Mrs. Sommer transition from relative being to an absolute being. She has now become

the subject and started realizing her own worth and freedom. Socialization traps women in immanence that produces nothing useful. Resistance, here is transcendence, when a person reaches out for something special beyond their survival.

"Mrs. Sommer after that did not move in the direction of bargain counter." For Mrs. Sommer bargain counter is a place of struggle, where she would stand for hours in a desperate state just to save a penny or two. By refusing to go there, she is actually refusing the role of typical exhausted mother. Within Beauvoir's framework, bargain counter represents immanence. It is the place where she bears all the physical exhaustion, to maintain household for one more day. Here, she breaks out the boundaries of immanence. By walking away, she is rejecting immanence, where her life must be the struggle for survival and choosing transcendence, where she knows her self-worth. Beauvoir notes that, she has now become the subject, who choose luxury for her own feet not for her children's wardrobe.

"She wanted an excellent stylish fit." This sentence represents the shift from need to want. For years Mrs. Sommer took practical steps only to fulfill her children's needs. Here, she is taking practical step for her own pleasure. She wanted an excellent stylish fit by going against the socialized image of sacrificial mother. She is buying shoes not for her basic needs but for luxury. Beauvoir defines subject is someone who has set goals for themselves. By wanting a stylish a fit, she has set a personal project for herself. She is no longer the Other who bought cheap things for herself on account of saving money. Society socializes women to consider herself in-essential. Mrs. Sommer is rejecting this false concept by demanding a stylish fit and making herself essential. She is telling herself that she deserves this type of luxurious treatment. By taking practical steps, she is leaving the state of immanence to which she is stuck. She is using the same mind

to come out of her social cage, which she used for groceries and her family shopping.

"Mrs. Sommer bought two high priced magazines." This sentence shows intellectual resistance. For years she has only read the grocery lists and bargain advertisements, but this time she is going to read something useful and intellectual. According to Beauvoir's framework Mrs. Sommer is shifting from immanence to transcendence. In immanence, her only focus was cleaning dishes, doing laundry and feeding her children, while in transcendence she has moved towards the world where people think, create and travel. She is re-claiming her essential self. Society has socialized her as The Other whose thoughts doesn't really matter, but she is trading herself as essential and deserved to be informed and entertain.

"Her stockings and boots and well-fitting gloves had worked marvels in her bearing had given her a feeling of assurance, a sense of belonging to the well-dressed multitude."

This sentence is the ultimate proof that shows resistance has completely re-written her identity. The word bearing refers to people carry themselves. For years her bearing was of tired and exhausted woman, bowed down carrying heavy grocery bags. By changing her stockings and boots she is now an independent and confident woman. Beauvoir defines subject as someone who think of themselves to be the part of this world and should actively participate. Mrs. Sommer is no longer the person looking at the crowd of wealthy and high-status people from outside but has actually join them. Socialization often makes women feel alienated like they are not the part of modern world. Mrs. Sommer is resisting this typical belief that she belongs to the essential world.

2.2. *A Pair of Jeans*

While analyzing the short story *A Pair of Jeans* we would come across different types of oppression. Patriarchal oppression is something we could see in the story

very prominently. Patriarchy, hypothetical social system in which the father or male elder has absolute authority over the female group. It is a social operating system that has divided the human life into two worlds. The public world and the private world. The public world is the world of business, politics, education and decision making which belongs only to men while private world is the world of serving family and managing house which only belongs to women. Public holds the power; they have the right to make laws and govern them which have made private life less important. Women are bound to their specifically assigned roles and always stay hidden. The structural nature of patriarchy has been supported by well-known scholars like Simone De Beauvoir who says that women think of themselves as secondary and less important in male dominated society. She argues that one is not born but rather becomes a woman. In a pair of jeans, the protagonist Mariam is treated by her in-laws like an object not an individual with her own views and thoughts.

"Begum hovered listlessly near his armchair for a minute, looking down at her husband waiting."

In this scene, the oppression can be seen through the silence of Mr. Malik and the hovering of Begum Malik waiting for her husband's command. Within the theoretical framework, Begum Malik occupies the position of The Other. She has been socialized by the society to not think for herself without her husband's concern. Her socialization is very successful that even as an elderly woman she cannot take a decision on her own. This is the model in which they wanted to fit Mariam. Begum Malik's behavior in front of her husband shows that she has lived all her life in a state of immanence. She never had the courage to go against her husband's decisions. Begum Malik's personality shows how women are in-essential. Although she is an important member of her family, she has no command over decisions of her home.

"Then she heard her husband calling her name, his voice supremely autocratic." This sentence shows the voice of authority of men. An autocrat is a ruler who has all the power. This scene represents the bitter truth of patriarchal oppression that men don not usually talk to their wives, they command them. Mr. Malik is calling begum Malik as he is the subject and she is the peripheral. Beauvoir argues that men is the subject, who has the authority to make rules and govern them. Mr. Malik's autocratic voice is truly the representation of power and dominance. Begum Malik has socialized to recognize this autocratic voice and respond immediately.

"You know very well what I mean. Don't pretend to misunderstand me, Begum." Here, Mr. Malik uses a specific type of psychological dominance. By saying "don't pretend", he is indirectly accusing his wife of lying. He thinks that she must know what he wanted to convey. He wants to say that she has failed to choose a modest bride for their son. Within the Beauvoirian framework, this sentence shows the denial of Begum Malik's subjectivity. He is making his own interpretation of her mind. He thinks that Begum definitely knows what he is going to say.

"Can you guarantee that she will make our son happy?" This quote shows how a woman value is determining in patriarchal society. In patriarchy, only one scale exists to measure a woman's value and dignity that how she serves her husband. This sentence reduces Marxism education, dreams, personality, and individuality to a single question: whether she would be a good wife or not. According to Beauvoir, man is the subject while woman is the Other. For Malik's family, the only thing that matters is her son's happiness. Mariam's feelings are valueless. She is the in-essential Other. Ayyub wants Mariam to be stuck in immanence. The people living in transcendence cannot be guaranteed because they are always ready for change, making new choices and trying new adventures. Girls

are socialized to believe that the only purpose of their life is to be a good mother and wife.

"After 25 years of marriage, she could read him like a book, his words, their nuance, the tilt of his eyebrow, the authoritative swing of his hand, the thin line of his mouth spelled only one message."

This sentence shows male authority, power, and dominance. Ayyub is like a silent boss. The text mentions the tilt of his eyebrows and the thin line of his mouth, showing how powerful facial expression does Ayyub possesses. There is only one message, shows that Begum has become expert in reading his husband's mind before even he speaks. In Beauvoir's framework, the Other is the one who only silently observes, without taking any action. Here, Ayyub is the subject while Begum is the other. Ayyub speaks and uses his facial expressions and body language while Begum silently watches him. Begum is in the state of absolute immanence. In 25 years of her married life, she has never tried to achieve transcendence but has only worked on perfecting her skills of making a man happy. "She did not know how to react in front of him, nor did she disagree with him over anything he said. Not one jot. Why did Ayyub have to see her like this…? She angrily groaned inside her head**."**

This sentence is the ultimate proof of patriarchal oppression. Ayyub is like the invisible ruler. Begum has lost her personality and identity, due to which she doesn't even know how to react in front of her husband. Why did Ayyub have to see her like this shows that if only she had seen Mariam in those jeans and jacket, it would be fine, but for Ayyub, as the head of the house, it is a sin. In Beauvoir's framework, man is the subject while woman is the other. Begum is so inessential in her own house that she cannot even react. The male-dominant society has killed her subjectivity in her 25 years of married life. Angrily groaning inside her head shows the extreme state of immanence. She cannot turn that groan into

transcendence by going against her husband's decision. She has been socialized to believe that whatever her husband thinks are the universal truth.

2.2.1. Socio-Moral Oppression

Socio-moral oppression is a systematic form of social control that uses cultural traditions, moral values and societal expectations to shape individual personality especially that of a woman. Within *A Pair of Jeans* this oppression can be seen as female body and wardrobe are used as a scale to measure her purity and character. Generally, socio-moral oppression works by peeling away women individuality and turning her physical appearance to be a battleground for judgmental people.

"I thought that you told me that she was a Sharif a very modest girl. Was that naked waist modest?"

While there are some patriarchal elements in this sentence, but primarily it shows socio-moral oppression. This is about how society judges a woman character. Here, Mariam's character is seen through the eyes of backward but so-called educated people pf society. Her father-in-law is calling her characterless only based on her dress code. Beauvoir argues that women are define as the other. Her own identity and subjectivity are of no importance. She is defining entirely be her in-law's views. They have judged her inner on the basis of her outer appearance. They are othering her, considering her as a woman who has fallen outside from the standard of modest and pure woman. No one is talking about her qualities and kindness but only about her naked waist which make her immoral in the eyes of people.

"She wanted to excuse Mariam's mode of dress to herself and to him, she knew she was not going to make a success of it because, secretly in her own heart she very much agreed with her husband."

This sentence shows socio-moral oppression but an internalized version of it. Mr. Malik mode of expression shows patriarchy, but this sentence shows the

result of patriarchy and the impacts on begum Malik's mind. Oppression is most successful, when it gets fixed in in an individual's mind and cannot get rid of it even if they want to. Begum Malik not only fear her husband, but she agrees with his false assumptions about Mariam's character. Beauvoir argues that women are train from early childhood to accept their assigned roles and this sentence is the proof of that successful socialization. Begum is not just agreeing with her husband to avoid a fight and to maintain peace in her relationship but secretly she agrees with patriarchal mindset. Begum being happy in her position as The Other. She chooses to be a good wife rather than an independent individual.

"Don't your cheeks burn at the thought of that bit of flesh you saw. And what if she has a boyfriend already. What if she takes drugs?"

This sentence shows socio-moral oppression. Here, Ayyub is doing character assassination of Mariam. He is supposing a whole sketch of Mariam's character from his own perceptive. He is accusing her to be involved in such activities which are forbidden. He takes a bit of flesh and connects it to her having boyfriends and taking drugs without any solid proof. According to Beauvoir transcendence is a way to move forward. Through transcendence a woman can define her own life. Ayyub is framing Mariam's transcendence as moral decay. To him Mariam's freedom seems like rebellion. It shows that, in patriarchy transcendence is consider dangerous.

"I am sure we can find lots of other women for our son, women who have a more discreet taste in clothing and a good understanding of modesty."

In this sentence, socio-moral oppression has been used to degrade Mariam. Ayyub stops seeing her as a person but as a failed product. To him, a good woman is someone who hides her body, and Mariam has committed a sin in his eyes by revealing her body. He has defined a good woman by connecting clothing to morality. According to Beauvoir, this standard image of women is taught through

socialization. Ayyub is the true representation of the community's socialization. He is reinforcing the idea that women should only be valued if they stay within the strict moral boundaries of society. Ayyub is the subject who is objectifying Mariam. He is not looking at her inner self or the qualities that she possesses, but judging her from the surface. Ayyub wants women to stay in immanence.

2.2.2. Cultural Oppression

Cultural oppression is an authoritarian mindset that views different cultures as separate and treats its belonging people differently within the same community. Within a pair of jeans, cultural oppression can be seen, when a woman's body is seen as a symbol of community's heritage. Generally, it works by denying women the ability to claim their subjectivity and making them slaves to the traditional boundaries of moral values.

"Huh, Ayyub grunted. Sharif dressed like that." In Mariam's culture, being Sharif is the most important element of a girl's character. When Ayyub says Sharif dressed like that, he is actually marking a line between those girls who follow tradition and those who choose a Western identity. He is kicking Mariam out of the respectable group of women. Beauvoir argues that a good woman is made through socialization. From early childhood, women are taught how to be modest and pure. Ayyub is reminding his wife that being a woman in this culture means constantly performing the Sharif identity. If a woman tries to break this social cage and step out of this identity, she is no longer a woman. The Other is never allowed to define themselves. They are always defined by men or society. Culture demands Mariam to stay in immanence, the same traditional girl, always. It doesn't allow her to achieve big success and try something new and adventurous.

"The so-called modern girls have twined their husbands around their little fingers**."** Here, the cultural oppression lies in the term so-called modern girls. Ayyub uses the term modern in a dirty sense. He is addressing girls like Mariam

in an insulting way. According to Beauvoir, socialization is something that tells us how to behave. Ayyub believes in traditional socialization, teaching women to stay calm and quiet. For him, university socialization is modern that corrupted female minds. He is using cultural shame to delete the concept of modern socialization and pull Mariam back towards traditional socialization. The Other is someone who is treated as an object. Ayyub is Othering Mariam by labelling her as so-called modern.

"Her perception of what her daughter-in-law should be like did not quite tally with the picture that Mariam presented."

This sentence shows cultural oppression as it represents the social map that is used by women to choose their daughters-in-law. Begum Malik has a fixed sketch for her son's bride in her mind, in which a girl like Mariam cannot be fitted. According to Beauvoir, socialization frames a woman to get fitted in specific mold. Begum's perception of her daughter-in-law was not born with her but was taught by society. Begum's socialization is traditional, while Mariam's socialization at university is modern, which comes into conflict with each other. Begum is in a state of immanence, by staying quiet at home and dressing traditionally, while Mariam is trying to transcend.

2.2.3. Resistance

Within the patriarchal and cultural matrix of *A Pair of Jeans* by Qaisra Shahraz resistance is physical and at deeper level a multi-layered struggle for female subjectivity and identity. The narrative establishes an oppressive environment where patriarchs tried to reduce female subjectivity and treated her like the in-essential other based on her wardrobe choice. Against this forced state of immanence, the protagonist tries to resist by breaking the social boundaries.

"Damn it. Her mind shouted rebelling. They are only clothes. … they have happily chosen as a bride for their son in their household."

This line mainly represents Mariam's internal rebellion. Before this moment Mariam was embarrassed about her clothes she was wearing. Her heartbeat was fast, and her cheeks were burning because of the shame. But at this moment she rejects the idea of being an oppressor. She is demarking her identity; by saying I am still the same young person. She is separating her outer physical appearance from her inner self. Beauvoir argues that patriarchy succeeds when women accept their status as The Other in society. Here, Mariam is re-claiming her subjectivity by using her internal voice. She refuses to be an object, viewing herself through the lenses of society. Society pushes women into the state of immanence, to be quiet and unchanging while Mariam is achieving transcendence, being a modern university student. Her identity as a liberal girl, who walks the hills is as valid as her identity as a future bride.

"As she put it on, her rebellious spirit reared its head again. They are only clothes; her mind hissed in anger."

This textual reference highlights the internal resistance of Mariam. At this stage, Mariam is dressing herself according to tradition. She is putting on the blue crepe salwar kameez to make herself presentable to her in-laws. She is putting on a shalwar kameez to look proper not because of extreme guilt. She protests angrily when her mind hissed. By saying they are only clothes, she is refusing to believe that western clothes make women bad while traditional clothes make women good. Beauvoir argues that patriarchal societies succeed when they convince women to view herself as The Other. Mariam's body is forced to act like an object, while her mind is completely alive and acting as a subject. Her resistance is internal, as her family can control her outer appearance but cannot control what she is feeling from inside. The traditional outfit is meant to trap women in state of immanence, while modern clothes help women to achieve transcendence. The angry hiss of Mariam's mind shows that; she is refusing her identity to remain stuck in immanence.

"She is a college student, college students do dress like that. Haven't you yourself joked about tatty jean-clad university students? Begum boldly persisted." In this scene, Ayyub is judging Mariam as immodest because she wore western clothes. Begum is normalizing modern life by stating that, college students do dress like that. She is protecting Mariam through verbal resistance in front of her husband. Begum reminds Ayyub how she used to joke about his modern university friends wearing jeans. Simone argues that men are allowed to transcend, while men are forced to remain immanent. Begum is taking stand for Mariam by reminding Ayyub that she is a university student and belongs to the new modern world. In patriarchy, men are the absolute subjects wile woman is The Other, who must agree. Begum uses Ayyub's university life to show that, his anger over Mariam is totally unfair. As head of the house, his every decision cannot be valid. For a moment Begum thinks like an independent woman.

"what if his mother or father picked up the phone…she would deal with them and the situation as it arose?"

This scene highlights the moments when Mariam was making herself ready to call Farook. Patriarchy expects women to hide themselves and stay quiet, that's why for a moment Mariam become panic. When she thinks of her in-laws, she was going to which off her phone which shows the fear of patriarchy. She then dismissed the patriarchal threat by saying, so what if they answer the phone. Simone explains that patriarchal structure maintain control because women become participants in their oppression inside their minds. They have this fear of what society will think. Mariam pushes away this fear by not letting Ayyub control her physical actions. Mariam completely reclaims her subjectivity, by taking stand for herself instead of running away and hide herself. Mariam chooses transcendence over immanence. Switching the mobile phone would be a retreat into immanence but her rebellion is a leap back into transcendence.

"Oh, there you go again about seemly things. There is nothing unseemly about contacting my own Fiancé. She laid extra stress on my own."

Mariam's mother is trying to convince her that direct action from a young woman is inappropriate. By mocking the word seemly things Mariam is making sarcastic comments on patriarchal systems. She boldly states that there is nothing wrong in contacting her fiancé. She refuses to allow patriarchs calling her modern communication as act of rebellion or shame. By laying extra stress on the word own she is reminding her mother that she is the one whom they have choose happily as a bride. Simone explains that under patriarchy women are treated as in-essential other. Mariam completely rejects being an in-essential mother. By emphasizing the word own she is reclaiming her subjectivity. She refuses to be an object, whose life decisions will be taken by the elders or the male authority. The cultural concept of what is seemly is mainly used to keep women in state of immanence. By mocking this seemliness, she tries to peruse transcendence.

3. Comparative Perspective

After analyzing both the short stories by Kate Chopin and Qaisra Shahraz, primarily based on two major themes: oppression and resistance; the analysis reveals that both the writers portray beautifully their protagonist's emotions and feelings. Both the writers represent their protagonists who are deeply buried in the multilayers of oppression. Though both the writers are almost a century apart, belong to different culture, ethnicity, religion, and different geographical locations, yet their works show that woman in every era, culture, society, and place face the problems like oppression or secondary status in one or the other way. Both the works accurately show that in patriarchal culture men have control over women, which is not only physical but also psychological, spatial and social. The rarely give them freedom of expression, choice and mobility.

4. Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that both *A Pair of Silk Stockings* and *A Pair of Jeans* present women's oppression as a complex and multi-dimensional experience shaped by patriarchal social structures. While Kate Chopin's story primarily explores economic, emotional, and social oppression, Qaisra Shahraz's narrative highlights patriarchal, socio-moral, and cultural oppression that regulates female identity and freedom. Through Simone de Beauvoir's theoretical framework, both protagonists are initially confined to the state of immanence, where their individuality is suppressed and they are treated as the inessential Other. Mrs. Sommers' brief journey of self-indulgence and Mariam's refusal to accept moral judgment based on her clothing represent significant moments of transcendence, as both women reclaim their subjectivity and challenge the roles imposed upon them. Although their acts of resistance differ in form—one being subtle and personal, the other more direct and ideological—they collectively reveal that resistance begins with the recognition of one's own identity and worth. Ultimately, these stories argue that women's liberation is not merely a rejection of external oppression but a struggle to move beyond socially constructed limitations and assert themselves as autonomous human beings capable of making independent choices.

5. Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to a textual analysis of Kate Chopin's *A Pair of Silk Stockings* and Qaisra Shahraz's *A Pair of Jeans* through the theoretical framework of Simone de Beauvoir. It focuses only on selected themes of oppression and resistance and does not examine other critical perspectives, such as Marxist, psychoanalytic, postcolonial, or intersectional feminist approaches. Moreover, the study is based solely on the selected texts and their literary interpretation; therefore, its findings

cannot be generalized to all literary works or to the broader experiences of women across different historical and cultural contexts.

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