



## Psychoanalytic Exploration of Motherhood among Brown's The Dancing Girls of Lahore and Saeed's Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area

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### ABSTRACT

Motherhood is a bond, a link, an association filled with love, care and affection between a mother and her children specifically daughter. Motherhood is a bond in which a mother also nurtures the emotional needs of the children and the children feels secure and complete. The data for this article has been collected qualitatively with the help of two ethnographic studies namely Brown's The Dancing girls of Lahore & Saeed's Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area. Keeping it in view, the two ethnographic studies have been examined through Lacanian theory of psychoanalysis to identify that how the prostitute mother and daughter relate to each other in terms of motherhood, how the red light area function as Lacanian real to sustain the patriarchal society as a socio-symbolic order and to identify the desire/lacks that this bond lead to in the life of prostitutes (mother and daughter). The findings of this article highlighted that the bond of mother and daughter between the prostitutes is affected by the society where a woman when loses charms and beauty is not accepted by the society. The accepted bond of motherhood which is a bond of nurture and support from the both sides is severed badly due to the pressure of the society. This article highlighted that the daughter prostitutes are forced by the mother prostitutes to give up their desires and dreams in order to fulfill the needs of the family as well as the demands of the mother prostitutes that strongly affected the lives of the young girls. The findings of this article highlighted that Lacanian real strongly functions as the society and business of prostitution that is considered to have no effect on the lives of the prostitutes is active here as the standards of the beauty and good lifestyle forced the mothers to keep themselves and their desires before the desires of the daughters.

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## 1. Introduction

Prostitution is a profession that has existed and practiced from the very existence of human beings. The word "prostitution" is derived from the Latin "pro" meaning "up front" or "forward" and "stituere", defined as "to offer up for sale" (Perkins & Lovejoy, 2007). Prostitution is a social violence and it is the bottom of the society and there is no bottom beneath it; it is the abuse and oldest usage of women where the women have no value even lying in the bottom and all the men has more value than prostitutes (Alexander, 1994). Although prostitution is considered unethical, yet despite that every big city of Pakistan has one such place that is called either the 'Heera Mandi' Brown (2005) or the red light area where girls and women run this business in houses managed by the elderly women called the caretaker/naika (TimothyTyoanande & Samson, 2014). Despite all the restrictions, these brothels thrive everywhere and men from each sort of profession go to these places for enjoyment (Rizvi, 2015). Prostitutes are called bad women and are never accepted by the patriarchal society

because providing sexual services is an immoral act and is condemned both by religion and the society (Khan et al., 2010). Prostitution has passed through changes and faced different thoughts but this profession is seen to provide pleasure in exchange for a certain amount of money. (Habib, Khan, Mehmood, & Sharif, 2016).

Motherhood is an experience of a woman that is shaped in the context of culture and society. It is a relationship of affection, care and love of a mother towards her children. It is perceived as a bond that has dual perspectives, on one hand the mothers' relationship with her powers to give birth and on the other hand the society that keeps all women subjugated by men (Rich, 2021). In context of culture and society, motherhood is seen as a duty of a mother to look after her children right from the moment the woman gets pregnant, to giving birth and till her death (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). Whereas, Dey and Das (2020) postulated that in the context of religion, motherhood is seen as a sacred bond where respect is given to the mother as she is the one who gives birth and takes care of the child. Based on the societal implications, a woman is seen only as a mother who is responsible for her child and does not have an identity of her own without any intellect or eminence. This responsibility without any assistance causes depression and stress among mothers. However, in reality motherhood is a very special bond that binds a child with her mother and mother feels warmth and provides for her baby without any burden or hatred (Weaver & Ussher, 1997). O'Reilly (2012) discussed Morrison's perspective related to motherhood where she has portrayed her mothers not as the oppressed one but as women to whom this bond gives freedom and the sense of self. Morrison upheld her stance that a woman does not need to give up her dreams or anything to be a mother; a woman can be herself while being a mother. (O'Reilly, 2012).

Gibbon (2010) was of the view that motherhood has been seen by different people from different perspectives giving different meanings and definitions and till today motherhood as an institution and affection receives new definitions by new authors both female and male. Motherhood is a job where mothers become the active managers of their children's lives, intervening in all the aspects of their personality developments. (Gibbon, 2010). In this article, two ethnographic studies, Brown's *The Dancing Girls of Lahore* and Saeed's *Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area* are selected. Brown's *The Dancing Girls of Lahore* (Brown, 2005) penned down the life, struggles, pain, traumas, desires, demands and the societal impact on the prostitutes of the (in)famous *Heera Mandi* (Brown, 2005) of Lahore. Fouzia Saeed's *Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area* (Saeed, 2001/2015) paints a very realistic picture of the women who sell their lives not only to earn and to satisfy the respectable men of the other part of the city but also to earn a place in the society. In this article the bond of motherhood is explored among the mother and daughter-prostitutes of *Shahi Mohallah* (Saeed, 2001/2015) and *Heera Mandi* (Brown, 2005) based on the data provided by Brown's *The Dancing Girls of Lahore* and Saeed's *Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area*. The main objectives and questions of this research article were to identify that how do women in Brown and Saeed's works relate with each other in terms of motherhood, what are the lacks/desires that this bond of motherhood crafts among the women of the red light area and does the red light area function as the Lacanian real as depicted in the two selected ethnographic studies to support the patriarchal societal symbolic order in the society of Pakistan?

Lacanian theory of psychoanalysis is employed as a theoretical framework to probe into the works and to carry out this research. The main objectives of this article are explored and answered under the light of the facts and data provided by the ethnographic studies. This research will be significant as it will provide a new perspective of motherhood that is quite different from the worldwide accepted belief of motherhood. This research will be significant as it highlights the aspect that the bonds of motherhood which are perceived to be smooth and perfect but in reality this bond is strongly dominated by the society that makes the relationship between the mother and daughter prostitutes shattered.

## 2. Literature Review

In order to explore the relationship of motherhood between prostitutes and their daughters, the scholar reviewed some works previously carried out on Brown's *The Dancing Girls of Lahore* (2005) and Saeed's *Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area* (2001). However, the scholar did not come across any work carried out on these works. Thus, in order to set the grounds for this article, the scholar reviewed the works on motherhood.

Ghasemi (2010) carried out a research on Toni Morrison's novels in order to negotiate the concept of black motherhood-specifically. Through the qualitative method, the research concluded that all the characters of Morrison's novels-Sethe, Sula, Jadine and Violet-did not submit themselves to the stereotypical genders roles and the duties as a mother. Morrison through her characters rejected the stereotypical mind-sets and made an assertion against the social and economic oppression that forced them into slavery. (Ghasemi, 2010).

Ramirez (2014) in order to determine the agitated and severed bond of mother and daughter along with the search for their identity carried out a research in Toni Morrison's novels *Beloved* and *A Mercy*. The research postulated that through the characters of Sethe and Florence, Morrison targeted the conservative notion associated with motherhood in order to not only protect themselves and their children from slavery but also to help them carry out the journey toward self-recognition and to stand against the standards of society. (Ramírez, 2014). Toni Morrison's *Beloved* was examined from the perspectives of slavery, motherhood and recurring trauma in an article by Lorenz (2021). The researcher postulated that in *Beloved* Morrison not only throws light on the effects of slavery on the relationship of mothers and daughters-specifically black mothers-but also through the character of Sethe postulates that apart of all the traumas, the women not only healed but also found a way to survive and break the chains of slavery bringing an end to the fate of being a slave victim (Lorenz, 2021).

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

In order to explore the bond of motherhood in Brown's *The Dancing Girls of Lahore* (2005) and Saeed's *Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area* (2001), Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis that comprises of the themes of desire, demand, concept of Other and the register theory is applied to comprehend the struggles and journey of the characters efficaciously from the chosen two ethnographic studies. Jacques Lacan (April 13, 1901 to September 9, 1981) was one of the most significant and controversial psychoanalyst who brought innovative ideas in the field of psychoanalysis. He is regarded as the modern psychoanalyst due to his striking and controversial ideas. Lacan strongly advocated that the language is the main source that shapes the identity, desires and the unconscious of a person as the subject of the society. Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis is based on three registers/orders namely the imaginary order, the symbolic order and the real order. (Homer, 2004)

#### **3.1. Lacan's theory of Psychoanalysis: the three registers/orders**

To understand the functioning of human mind, Lacan developed a register theory. The register theory namely the imaginary, the symbolic and the real order, comprises of all the important concepts that collectively form the skeleton of the Lacan's psychoanalytic theory. These registers correspond not only to the mental state of a person but also play a significant role in the developmental stages of an infant as it reaches the age of maturity. (Dylan, 1996).

##### **3.1.1. Mirror stage/The imaginary order**

The imaginary register proposed by Lacan is the unbreakable relationship between the subject and the image (Laplanche, Pontalis, Lagache, & Nicholson-Smith, 2018). Mirror stage is one of the most significant concepts introduced by Lacan in his theory of psychoanalysis also called the stage of Ideal ego (Kemp, 2006). Mirror stage is an element of the imaginary stage where the individual develops its personality with the identification of the other. Mirror stage provides the subject a false image of wholeness thus this false image of completeness is a form of delusion and the subject cannot see itself without the image of the other. Mirror stage is the first step that provides a sense of unified self and at this point due to the feelings of alienation and lack to be one with the image, the ego takes place that is also called the imaginary register (Lacan, 1977). The imaginary creates an illusion of fullness, completeness, duality and similarity (Evans, 2006).

##### **3.1.2. The Symbolic Order**

The second order of Lacan's theory of registers is the symbolic order. In symbolic order the main focus of Lacan was on the formation of language, sign and signifier. After the baby enters the imaginary stage and develops a certain sense of self, he then enters the world of language and starts to make meanings and accepts the rules of the language and society as a part of the society (İsaoğlu, 2014). Humans are dependent on the symbols to perform in the

society and according to Lacan "existence for the subject is only possible through his representation in the symbolic wrap of language". (Lacan, 1977, p. 234)

When the child acquires the language, it is his first step into the symbolic order because language itself is the system of symbolic identification. It is with the help of symbolic order that the child starts making meaning from the symbols. The first step of the symbolic order is that it helps the child to determine that he is separate/independent from others. The separation from others is seen largely from the perspective of the mother as the child during the mirror stage remains dependent on the mother thus, symbolic order enables the child to recognize and understand his individuality. (Tyson, 2014). The symbolic and imaginary registers collectively create one of the most important register of Lacan's theory called the real register/order.

### **3.1.3. The Real order**

According to Lacan, the real is something that is impossible to imagine or to think about. "The real is a place where exists an original unity" (Lacan, 1977, p. 319). The real register can be defined as the one that cannot be explained through words, considerations or details but might be represented. The real comprises of all the rejected, repressed, unbearable and uncontrolled subjects that occur in the imaginary and symbolic orders. The real comprises of the rough and initial experiences that cannot be imagined or explained in any language (Murtagh & Iurato, 2016). It is impossible and exists beyond the realms of symbolization. Real is not related to the objective existence of world or the account of reality associated with something but real in Lacan's theory is about the impossibility-an impossibility that reoccurs (Hill, 1997). The real is the register that lies beyond the realm of reason, language, words, laws and rules of humans experiences (Himes, 2005). Thus, the imaginary is defined as the deception, the symbolic in connection to the society and symbols and the real as the impossible-an existence that is present and absent at the same time.

### **3.1.4. The concept of Other**

The concept of other is used by Lacan throughout his teachings. He postulated that the Other with capital 'O' specifies the culture, authority and sexuality and the other with a small 'o' specifies ego from the imaginary stage (Lacan, 1977). The imaginary phase is an illusion but when the child enters the symbolic register, he enters with an external image that is referred as the Other. The Other in other words is the knowledge of the absence of something that a person does not have referred as desire or demand. (Fink, 2005).

### **3.1.5. Desire**

Desire is the want-the absence of an object, name or quality that a person cannot claim to have. Desire designates the desire of everlasting relationship with the Other. In other words, desire is basically the desire of a person to be as one's own image, signifier and the object (Spargo & Botting, 1993). Lacan expressed his views on desire in his seminar (1958-1959) and highlighted that the desire in reality is the analysis of the one who desires. Desire, for Lacan, is not constructed biologically nor it is related only to the dreams and hallucinations as depicted by Freud; according to him desire is always associated with the desire of the Other, it is never satiated and is also hidden with what the Other desires. (Petry & Hernández, 2010).

## **4. Methodology**

The study is qualitative and through this investigation, the researcher has been aimed to explore the descriptive value of the data. Meanwhile, two novels entitled *The Dancing Girls of Lahore* and Saeed's *Taboo* have the the source of data and a particular sample has been drawn through purposive sampling technique. Hence, the data will be analyzed by applying the textual method approach.

## **5. Analysis**

Brown's *The Dancing Girls of Lahore* and Saeed's *Taboo! The Hidden Culture of Red Light Area* are explored through the lense of Lacanian psychoanalysis in order to examine the bond of motherhood among the prostitute mothers and daughters of the (in)famous *Shahi Mohallah/Heera Mandi* (Brown, 2005 ) of Lahore. Lacan's register theory i.e. imaginary, symbolic and real order, desire, demand and concept of Other will be applied on the two ethnographic works to explore the relationship of mother with daughters in the business of prostitution.

### **5.1. Motherhood: a relationship among mother and daughter in Brown's *The Dancing Girls of Lahore* (2005)**

In this section of analysis, the bond of motherhood is examined between Maha and her mother and relationship of Maha as a mother with her three daughters namely Nisha, Nena and Ariba- from different fathers. Motherhood is seen as a bond where children are dependent on mother and a mother is good only if she incorporates her family into her personality (Berry, 1993). Whereas among the prostitutes, the relationship of motherhood is reversed where mother is dominant and demands from her daughters to fulfil her desires (Brown, 2005). In Brown's *The Dancing Girls of Lahore* (2005), the relationship of motherhood is significantly different from the accepted definition of motherhood in the society. Motherhood in *Heera Mandi* (Brown, 2005) is associated only with daughters as they are the primary asset for the mothers in their old age when they themselves cannot earn. Among the prostitutes, the mother basically demands and expects from her daughter to do everything for the fulfilment of the desires of her mother as she herself did the same for her mother and family.

*"In Heera Mandi a woman without daughters has a bleak financial future and, perhaps ironically, a surprising number will find themselves a victim of this cruel fate-particularly those girls who are not yet out of childhood but who enter the business and entertain too many clients too often, and for too long" (Brown, 2005, p. 73).*

Here, Patriarchal socio-symbolic order of Lacan intervenes as in the society outside the for walls of *Heera Mandi* (Brown, 2005) a woman is recognized only if she is fertile and can bear children (Brown, 2005, p.73). Same is the case with the prostitutes; the children especially the daughters, are a symbol of good fortune for the mother as she can secure her a good future otherwise she will be ruined with no one to feed and provide for her once she grows old. Motherhood in *Heera Mandi* (Brown, 2005) is related only with the daughters as the mothers do not remain beautiful for the society when they get old and cannot earn themselves. Also the society do not demand the mothers, thus in the business of prostitution, the daughters are taken as the pension plan by the mothers in order to survive. Motherhood is a link that ties both mother and children in a relationship that can grow weak but can never be broken (Gibbon, 2010). When a woman becomes a mother, it is expected from her that she will look after her children with outhaving any regard for herself. In Brown's work, the relationship of motherhood between Maha and her mother is likely the same, as when Maha got married-a legal marriage (Brown, 2005, p. 14) with Adnan, she left the business for her husband. Her mother resented her decision as she was beautiful and a source of good fortune and future for her mother and sisters.

*"Maha says they nag her because she's no longer bringing in the money (Brown, 2005, p. 13).*

Discussed from the prospective of prostitutes and Lacan's notion of demand and desire, the accepted definition of motherhood where mother is the provider for her children is opposed as the bond of motherhood here lacks affection, love and care because as a daughter, Maha was a source of fulfillment of desires and a mean to have all the luxuries of life for her mother as it is only based on the needs of the mother that becomes a demand for the daughter to fulfil and it is quite obvious in the case of Maha and her mother. Thus, the bond of motherhood Maha and her mother is observed as shabby. The relationship of motherhood in Brown's work is also seen as the relationship between Maha as the mother with her daughters; Nisha, Nena and Ariba from different fathers but all in the same business of prostitution. In motherhood it is considered as the first and the foremost social and moral duty of the mother to provide the physical as well as the emotional satisfaction to the children. (Arendell, 1999). Nisha and Nena are the two daughters of Maha from a 'sayeed' with whom she was in a relationship for a very long time when she was 15 years old. As a mother she never cared for them because when she was a child her mother did the same. Here Lacan's notion of imaginary register from his theory of psychoanalysis intercedes because of the perception of the child that s/he receives during his childhood about the surrounding that she lives in and grows up (Hughes & Malone, 2002). The negligence of Maha towards Nisha and Nena is the outcome of the imaginary maternal identification that Maha associates with her mother in order to satisfy her ego.

*"Louise, what shall I do? My marriage is finished. Next year Nisha and Nena will have to go to the bazar. They'll earn a lakh of rupees to go with men [...]" (Brown, 2005, p. 110).*

When Nisha and Nena grew to the age and Maha launched them into business, she as a mother and a prostitute by business fulfilled all the requirements to make them presentable and to earn connections that can provide them with good fortunes. But deep down, all these were her own desires that she projected on her daughters as a demand that they have to fulfil. Here, Lacan's identification of self is clearly depicted because Maha in her early life saw all this as a daughter and now when she is mother herself, she identifies herself through her daughters. For Lacan, identification of self is a phenomenon that is associated with the distinction of self from the Other who is in power. Identification is something that in other words is the contrast between the sameness and the difference (Duan, 2011). To go with men, to earn a lakh of rupees in order to earn and to provide for food is basically the desire of Maha that she demanded from her daughters and because of this desire, she launched her daughters into the business. Her desire is also traced with her primary maternal identification because when she was of the same age she was in the market earning food for her family.

*"My life is going to be good. We will have a new house, and we won't have to worry about the rent[...]My daughter is going to have a rich husband. Nothing else matters" (Brown, 2005, p. 221).*

However, after Nisha and Nena gets launched in the business and starts bringing fortunes in the house, Maha on one hand seems happy but on the other hand she feels gloomy because she knows that being old will do her no good. Here Lacan's real order intercedes; the real is something that is present and absent at the same time Himes (2005), as it creates a void in Maha's life that she can never fill. She is a part of prostitution but is not at the same time. She is not a prostitute with customers herself but she is still a prostitute with daughters to manage to. Nisha and Nena on the other hand as daughters submit to their mothers' desires and demands. Demand is basically the recognition and love from the Other who is the one in authority (Lacan & Miller, 2013). Although they themselves had desires of a happy life with the man of their liking, yet Nena went to Dubai just for her family and for her mother as for her Maha is the Other-the ultimate one for Nena.

*"Louise Auntie, she whispers. Help me. I don't want to dance in the bazaar [.....]" (Brown, 2005, p. 109).*

However, despite of their own desires, they are bound to fulfil the demands implied upon by their mother. As Lacan postulated that desire is always articulated through demand and is dependent on it. (Lacan, 1977)

Maha although is a prostitute but she is a mother to her children. She provides for her children and as a mother she is fulfilling her duties. The reason she dances or has customers is to provide both for her children and for herself. Although motherhood with regard to Maha is seen as her desire first but she did everything she could to provide for the best training to her daughters so that they will have a future. Her actions showed her concern as a mother for her daughter that was overpowered by the socio-symbolic pressure of the society that for a tawaif to live and survive is only through good training and rich connections.

*"I'm finished Louise, she says. Men don't want me. They want my daughters. My time is over and now it's their time[.....]become a naika and deal in her daughters" (Brown, 2005, p. 245)*

In *The Dancing Girls of Lahore (2005)*, motherhood is seen as the desire of a mother-a prostitute for the designation, all the luxuries of life that she once had or cannot have in her life and in turn looks towards her daughters to fulfil that gap. In the business of prostitution, the birth of a girl is like a pension plan for the mother as the girl will replace her mother in the business of prostitution and will keep the family alive.

## **5.2. Motherhood: Maha and Ariba**

A mother's affection is the same for all her children regardless of any difference. While studying motherhood, much attention is given to the bond between mother and daughter.

Daughters are brought up to conform the dreams and demands of the mothers and to become self-sacrificing like their mothers. Mothers provide their images of womanliness through their love, care and affection and daughters when they grow up and become mothers reflect this image to their daughters (Nice & Campling, 1992). Whereas in *The Dancing Girls of Lahore (2005)*, Louise Brown throws light on the relationship between Maha-mother and one of her daughters-Ariba. Ariba was the daughter of Maha from a Sheikh but as she has dark skin, she is the most ignored child in the house. Maha hardly pays any attention to her as compared to her other children. She calls her 'gandi' (Brown, 2005) because of her appearance that is the result of her own negligence towards her. Maha felt hardly any affection towards her and was more than happy when a couple wanted to adopt her as their child.

*"Ariba has done something wrong,[...] I think her very existence is enough to incite her mother's wrath. (Brown, 2005, p. 100).*

One of the reasons that she was not accepted even by her mother is because of the patriarchal-symbolic order that a child from a different father is not accepted by the other man and because Maha was in a relationship with Adnan she hardly felt anything for Ariba. In society and especially in the business of prostitution only fair skin is beautiful. Lacan's symbolic order intervenes here that her rejection by her mother and the culture of Heera mandi is because of her skin that throws her in the dwells of ignorance and dejection. The symbolic order is the one that projects the advancement from the world of imaginary order to the realms of desires along with all the rules, regulations of society that a person has to follow (Ross, 2002). Despite of everything, Maha does have a corner for her and discloses that Ariba resembles more like her but does not say it out loud. *"They know. It's okay. Nisha and Nena are nice girls. But Ariba...she's different. She's like me. She'll be good at the business"* (Brown, 2005, p. 111). She admits that Ariba resembles her in appearance and will be good at business but fails to recognize it because of the societal notion. *"Ariba is young, I know it, but what can I do?" Maha sighs. "I say bad things to her, but I know she has a good heart"* (Brown, 2005, p. 256). Nonetheless after this whole struggle because of the Patriarchal and Eurocentric-symbolic order, Maha fails to acclaim the similarity between her and Ariba as she married Adnan even after her mother forced her to focus on her business.

Thus from the above given instances and with the help of Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, Maha is seen as a mother who demands from her daughters to provide for the luxuries of life, to give up their dreams in order to make their mother happy because it is the demand of their mother and their business. But here not only the selfish/demanding side of Maha is shown as a mother, she is also portrayed as a mother who cares for her daughters and makes efforts to find good customers for them, train them and to not let them fall in love with their customers.

### **5.3. Motherhood: a relationship among prostitute mothers and daughters in Saeed's *Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area (2001)***

Motherhood is perceived as a multifaceted site, where a woman on one hand faces oppression by the patriarchal dominance of ideal mothers and on the other hand enjoys this bond of joy and originality (O'Reilly, 2004). In this section of analysis, the bond of motherhood is examined between mothers and daughters-prostitutes. However, apart from looking into the relationship of mother and daughter prostitute, this analysis also throw light on the bond of motherhood between a mother and daughter from the respected society-outside the *Shahi Mohallah* (Saeed, 2001/2015). Motherhood is a unique bond that exists between a biological mother and her children. However, apart from that, there are women-grandmothers, aunts, sisters or cousins who help the mother to perform her responsibilities associated with motherhood. Such helping hands in the shape of women apart from the blood mothers are called 'other mothers' (Collins, 2002). The bond between the other mother and the child can have the same ties like with the blood mother. (Procházková, 2012). In *Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area (2001)*, the relationship between Laila and Kaisera is the relationship between a child and her other mother. Kaisera is the one who brought up Laila as her own daughter where in reality she is her grandmother but this fact is not shared with Laila. Kaisra raised Laila for her own secure future because in the business of prostitution, a prostitute without daughter is finished.

*"Kaisera declared that Laila would be raised as her own. The future seemed somewhat secure[...]even end up on the streets in her old age" (Saeed, 2001/2015, p. 169).*

Kaisera reflected Lacan's notion of patriarchal socio-symbolic order because in order to survive she must have a valued commodity otherwise she will be left to rot in the society and will not be accepted by anyone. Desire is associated with something that is similar to Other's desire and the subject keep on searching for different objects to relate to but the desire is never satiated (Gasparyan, 2014). She invested in Laila in order to fulfil her desires. Through Laila she wanted to have a life where she need not worry about anything and she enjoys her status as a mother who launches her daughter into this profession and worry about nothing else except her own bright future through the face of her daughters. Kaisera felt worried about Laila because of her stubborn and disobedient nature. She does not want her to sit, eat and get fat because then she would not be able to get the attention of the customers. Here Kaisera becomes the symbol of Lacan's notion of maternal desire because if Laila fails to grasp the attention of the customers she would not bring good money home and that means they all have to suffer. *"I do not know what to do with this girl. She's becoming an economic liability and a social embarrassment for me" (Saeed, 2001/2015, p. 112).*

*"Did you see that, Fauzia? No respect for her elders! You can ask these gashtian to giggle, laugh, eat and sleep, but they won't learn manners and how to do their own work" (Saeed, 2001/2015, p. 110).*

Here the notion of maternal desire and demand being dictated by the patriarchal socio-symbolic order is clearly highlighted as they are not allowed to enjoy themselves even after selling their art (bodies) and are expected to behave exactly the way their mothers want them just to fulfil their own desires. It is demanded from daughter prostitutes to act and behave and be presentable so they can bring good money for their family and sisters and to not even laugh as they do not have a life of their own. The relationship between a mother and a daughter is sympathetic one. A daughter feels same affection and love towards her mother. Laila however, at first felt it as a burden because she was always nagged by her mother to think about her family, *"they were going on about how much they do for me and how I don't do my duty to them in return" (Saeed, 2001/2015, p. 52)*

*"I don't know what they want from me. I try my best. She just doesn't like to see me laugh" (Saeed, 2001/2015, p. 111).*

Kaisera as a mother of Laila has feelings for her daughter. Although Laila is a source of rozi for her but deep down she worries about Laila and wants her to have a good future and pay less attention to glamour and fantasies because she is a prostitute and her fantasies would not bring her any good. Thus, the bond of motherhood between the other mothers and daughters, has the feelings of both affection and care as the relationship of Kaisera and Laila from the business of prostitution depicted that there are harsh and affectionate events in this relationship however the love that a mother has for her children is absent from their relationship. Motherhood is a sacred bond where a mother is expected to perform her duties without any mistake because the future of her children is at stake as she is responsible for their bright future along with their physical and mental health and there is not a single chance for any mistake (Caplan, 1990). Saeed is exceptional because in her work where on one side she threw light on the culture of prostitution within the four walls of *Shahi Mohallah* (Saeed, 2001/2015), on the other hand she also gave an insight in the socio-cultural notion, rules and implications on the lives of women outside the four walls of *Shahi Mohallah* (Saeed, 2001/2015) who are referred as the respected women. Saeed in her work discussed the fears of her aunt regarding her daughter Faiza. Her aunt is worried about her daughters' marriage and hopes to find a good match for her because according to her a daughter is meant to get married.

*"I had asked her to look for someone for Faiza. She has suggested a few other people, but they did not like Faiza" (Saeed, 2001/2015, p. 99).*

The aunt constantly remains worried about her daughters' marriage and claims that these are the customs created by the society and they can do nothing to change. This is how the things work for a girl. Here, aunt signifies the societal-symbolic order because she acts as a



puppet of the society and portrays the rules and conditions that are to be met in order to get a good proposal for her daughter.

"Now look here Fouzia beti, I didn't make these traditions, and neither did your uncle. Ask her why she blames us for putting her through this[...]People come, they see her, and then we don't hear from them again [.....],take care of her complexion?" (Saeed, 2001/2015, p. 99).

Socio-symbolic order intervenes here because the symbol of beauty for a girl is fair complexion and can only secure a good proposal from a boys' family if she is beautiful and fails to get a good proposal if her complexion is dark. Fouzia here becomes the victim of the society as she fails to come up to the standards of the society. Ideal mother is a notion that is normally associated with the mothers because it is expected from them that they will perform their duties well without any problem and will keep themselves after their family and especially after their children who are dependent on them. The protection, education along with the moral training of the children is associated with the mother (Arnup, 1994). Saeed also discussed the relationship of Khanum, Nargis, Shalo and Chanda-the other young prostitutes in the business earning for their mothers. All these prostitutes are crushed by the desires of their mother who pushed them into the business to earn for the family as it is the sole duty of the daughters to work and bring all the luxuries for their mothers, sisters and brothers. (Saeed, 2001/2015).

Khanum an actress prostitute who left the *Mohallah* to be an actress explained that whatever she did in her life is dictated by her mother because it is believed that the mother knows everything and every step is taken under the mothers' guidance. Lacan's notion of maternal desire is highlighted in their relationship because it is the mother who decides and her desire is to have a future for sisters and her own satisfaction, what Khanum wants makes no difference. Desire is associated with something that is being suppressed or hidden (Sheikh, 2017). However, Khanums' mother showed some traces of motherhood because she is ultimately her daughter and she wanted a secure future for her.

"My mother wants security for me. She worries about my future" (Saeed, 2001/2015, p. 104).

The relationship of Nargis and her mother is quite similar to Khanums' relationship with her mother. She entered into the business from a very young age and was managed by her mother. Maternal desire is quite evident here because the mother is the one who takes decisions related to her daughters' life. The bond of motherhood for Shalo and Chanda is most likely the same. Their relationship was overpowered by the maternal desires to have the life of luxuries. It is believed that for a mother her children are the same and she loves them despite any difference. However, Shalo faced strong abhorrence from her mother because of her colour. Shalo's mother pushed her back because of her complexion and gave more attention to her beautiful sisters. Here Lacan's socio-symbolic order intervenes as beauty is the symbol of social acceptance and Shalo became the victim of this society because of her complexion. Lacan postulated that the symbolic order has to be assumed as one that is superimposed on the child (Rae, 2019). Her future is determined by her mother that shows an egoistic side of her mother because what Shalo wants does not even matter, all that matters is the family-the mother.

## **6. Findings and Discussion**

The article showed that the bond of motherhood among Brown's *The Dancing Girls of Lahore (2005)* and Saeed's *Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area (2001)* is explored as tattered, shabby and overpowered by the demands of the mothers. The bond of motherhood that is considered as the one where mother is the provider for her children is explored as somewhat different as here daughters are the one looking after the families and fulfilling the demands and desires of the mothers. Through Lacan's imaginary order, Maha-mother prostitute of Nena and Nisha is seen as one forcing her daughters into the business to earn as she in her young age was forced by her mother to do the same for her family. Same is the case with the mothers of Saeed's work, where mothers of Laila, Chanda, Shalo and Nargis did the same with their daughters as they themselves were the earners of the family. The bond of motherhood is absent from the relationship of mothers and daughters as the societal implications affected them severely. The bond does not confirm to the traditionally accepted definition of motherhood because of the nature of their profession at one hand and on the other hand this business is the only source of their earnings.

Also, the bond of motherhood is tattered among the prostitute daughters and mothers as the red light area or the Shahi Mohallah serves as the patriarchally dominant-Lacan's socio-symbolic order- where beauty is the source of acceptance. Thus, the mothers when they start getting old look up to their daughters as the medium to keep the cycle of life going and to start earning. Lacan's real is evident also as the mothers although feel bad for their daughters and want them to have a good life but in reality all this is their mean to fulfil their own desires that they fail to achieve in their old age. Through the characters of Maha, Kaisera and mothers of Shalo, Chanda and Nargis, Lacan's desire is also highlighted as the daughters serve as the medium to fulfil the desires that are in turn the demands of the mothers because the mothers are the Other with a big 'O' thus the desire of the daughters becomes the demand of the mothers. The desires of the daughters are overpowered by the demands of the mothers. This article not only probed into the societal implications on the prostitutes but *Saeed's Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area (2001)* also highlights the pressures of the society on the women who are outside the four walls of the *Heera Mandi* (Brown, 2005). The relationship of Faiza and her mother is also analysed through the lens of Lacan's socio-symbolic order where the standard of beauty is light skin which is the source of concern not only for Faiza but also for her mother. Thus, psychoanalytic exploration of motherhood among Brown's *The Dancing Girls of Lahore (2005)* and *Saeed's Taboo! The Hidden Culture of a Red Light Area (2001)*, the bond of motherhood is shabby and not according to conventional notions of motherhood as the mothers are the one who are the centre of all the demands and desire from the daughters, the society acts as socio-symbolic order and the relationship is shabby.

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