

## Reader, Text, Jealousy and Anger: Zaib-un-Nissa Hamidullah's *The Bull and the She Devil*

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### Review Article

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**Abstract:** This paper unfolds male stereotypical authoritative nature under the lens of reader response theory by Rosenblatt i.e. reader and text in *The Bull and She Devil*. This paper argues that a text has different meanings to different readers. Therefore, the theme of jealousy and anger is due to male authoritative nature and feelings of comparison in the selected short story. Based on the idea of transaction among the reader, text, author and social context by Rosenblatt, this paper highlights that the husband is a merciless creature toward his wife, relatives and the bull. As anger is due to male stereotypical authoritative nature, it causes jealousy and the end of his life. Ironically, he blames the destructive influence of his wife instead blaming his own negative approach.  
**Keywords:** Jealously, anger, text, reader, reader response theory.

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the causes of jealousy and anger in *The Bull and the She Devil*. This study also aims to explore the causes of jealousy and anger that affected the lives of husband and wife with reader response.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Reader response stands individually while reading a text. Rosenblatt [1] says that reader response is important to understand a text. She asserts that there are millions of readers for millions of literary text.

She further says that a text remains text on a page until a reader does not transform it with different meanings. In addition, she asserts that reading involves transaction among a reader, text, author, social and cultural context while literary work exists between a reader and text [1].

Rosenblatt explains that this is a reader who "infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the text or verbal thoughts". She defines the strong relationship between a reader and text. A reader brings another meaning to text and gives shape to text. She asserts that a reader recognizes past experiences and attains new understanding of a text. According to her, the relationship between a reader and text is transactional relationship where a reader reacts to the text in different ways with personal interpretation [2].

Kahique [3] argues that Hamidullah's short stories deal "with women in their varied roles as daughter, mother, sister, wife and daughter -in-law". Her stories are simple in narration but deal with societal issues, marriage, domestic issues and domestic abuse.

She also writes with male point of view and *The Bull and the She Devil* is one of them [2].

Ali in A Progressive View of Art writes that art has art that derives material from life. "Art leads to mental and emotional activity, stimulation of a progressive type which leads us along the lines of the highest consciousness" [4]. Interpreting this statement, interpretation of jealousy and anger gives a multidimensional picture of male dominated society.

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This story is about a small family. The family experiences certain terrible changes which ruined their lives. The story is about a husband who is an admirer of her wife's beauty. He also knows that her wife is soft spoken. She is a threat to him because there are some people who also love her. The story is about the cruelty of a husband who looks for differences between them. Cruelty and feeling of differences planted the seeds of doubt into his heart which developed jealousy and caused anger as Khalique [3] says that Hamidullah's story is about the "yearning of differences".

The story is described by the isolated routine life of the husband. The first seed of jealousy was planted after few weeks of their marriage. The glimpse is seen in the following text, "but as the weeks passed and he saw her about their mud hut, the way she walked, the way she smiled at others, the tender look in her eyes as she patted the bullock, in his mind a doubt was born" [5].

Above text shows that her conversation with others made him realize that there is a difference between them. Feelings of being indifferent to his wife added misery to his life. He was stubborn in his jealousy even while drinking from the well he imagined her face and outburst with anger. With reference to his imagination, we notice in the following text, "from the depth of the water she stared back at him. Yes, even here, even here, on the land she haunted him" [5]. His anger and jealousy had deep roots in his heart. The preceding sentences reveal that in fact he was unable to resist her.

He was jealous of her wife's love with her nephew, brother and the bull. Her beauty and fatal jealousy are juxtaposed in the story. Generally, beauty and jealousy resulted in unusual responses. Qadir (the husband) even in imagination never forgot to hit her as in the following text he reacts, "in a sudden outburst of fury he clenched his fist at the lovely face. 'Shaitan', he shouted. 'She Devil! She Devil!! She Devil!!!'. Frenziedly he picked up a stone and hurled it into the well, aiming straight at her face" [5]. In the above text, the increase in the exclamation mark from one to three vividly indicates the intensity of his jealousy and fury.

His jealousy was dangerously associated with his imaginations. Whenever he thinks about her, thinks negatively. As we read, "and he noticed, first with apprehension and then with anger that her face, so expressionless when speaking to him, was soft and sweet when turned towards his nephew, his elder brother or his bullock" [5]. He was blind in his jealousy and anger and associated everyone with his wife. Association always planted more seeds of jealousy into his heart with furious reactions. We read in the following text, "he looked with antagonism at the fine beast of burden in front of him, and anger rising high gave the bull another vicious twist of its tail" [5].

Qadir was an evil and merciless man. To him, human and animal both have equal proportion with respect to revenge. He never pity animal which belonged to him. When he recalled the previous incidents of his wife and felt that she is kind to everyone, it made him insane. He hit all those who belonged to her. He reacted, "in his annoyance at remembrance of the night before, he picked up a stone and aimed it straight at the animal's head..." [5].

On the other hand, one day while going back to hut, he thought that she (his wife) must be alone in the hut. He rashly went to the hut. But suddenly felt headache and thought, "It's this dull ache in my head; " he thought angrily, this dull ache that this She Devil has put there". And again, anger infuriated him. "Curse her", he said, spitting once again" [5]. The preceding sentences show that he blame her if he suffers from anything.

Qadir always thought that she must love her as she loves her brother, nephew and the bull. This feeling made him more aggressive and furious. "damn the creature! Again his anger against the animal returned and he prodded it viciously between its legs and felt a passing satisfaction at the way the poor beast winced" [5]. The text indicates that without any proof he always scolded her and the bull.

Apart from love, he also thought about obedience with reference to the bull for competition. We can also feel the propagandistic approach through his thoughts and planning. After knowing that the bull has been strayed and running wild outside of the home, he said to himself, "She Devil! he had thought. 'I'll show her who's owner of the bull, I'll show her whose command it obeys'" [5]. This thought of comparison reveals that how he exploited her wife's self-determination. But the animal did not obey him. The animal always obeyed his wife. He disliked the bull. He shouted at him and said, "Faithless creature,' he shouted at the poor, uncomprehending animal. "Even you have surrendered your soul into this She Devil's keeping" [5].

He tried to prove that she is her fellow. In his ridiculous feelings of comparison, he said to the bull, "She's after my soul as well,' he shouted. 'She wants to ensnare me as she has ensnared all the others. She Devil, She Devil, She Devil!" [5]. Comparatively, in the preceding sentences while calling her 'She Devil', the use of comma indicates the intensity of his jealousy and anger with exclamation mark. After this incident, Qadir became more furious and committed an abominable act. He hit her with stick, "Once twice and thrice the blows fell, each time more forcefully" [5].

His anger and jealousy planted the first seed of hate into his wife's heart. After beating her, he deeply saw into her eyes, "He gazed fascinated deep down into their depths and saw hate uncoil within them, a deep and deadly hate of him and that he was..." [5]. Qadir left home and reached to the well where he used to drink water and saw her face on the surface of the water, as usual.

The writer says that her wife's smiling face again sparkled on the surface of the water with hate and love but mockingly. Now his wife's feelings were somber and delight. But in his usual manner he shouted, " You devil," he said, dry-eyed now and curiously tranquil. "You She Devil" [5]. He then, " plunged into the depth of the well" [5]. His jealousy and anger resulted in his death. His last utterance, You She Devil (.) followed by a period shows the end of his life and end of his wife's miseries as well. Qadir's end with his imaginations shows that in the end he accepted reality and influence of her wife as she ruled over him with beauty and charm. His 'dry-eyed' revealed that he admitted his wife's influence.

### CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Qadir's (the husband) jealousy and anger overpowered his wife. His authoritative nature overshadowed her wife's freedom and loyalty. The way he treated his wife reflected the power of male authorities in society, in general. The analysis reveals that it is between the reader and text to

dissect hidden meanings. In short, this is reader who unfolds implicit meanings through his/her response to the text. However, response to a text varies from reader to reader.

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