

Choice, Voice, and Power: An Analysis of Mafijon in Mahbub-Ul-Alam's *Mafijon*

Abdur Rahim*

Abstract

*There has been a long debate in the field of knowledge whether women can choose and speak. Colonisation is commonly considered a process of making the colonised people (both men and women) non-speaking agents. For women, it is truer as they experienced colonisation from two edges--the imperial forces and the male domination from outside and within society. Everything in society was designed to put women in the peripheral position. The history of literature has been a biased tradition of entertaining this kind of male attitude but only a few writers have come forward to posit women in other ways. Mahbub Ul Alam, a Chittagonian by birth, a First World War-warrior, and a veteran writer has attempted to portray women in a non-conformist manner in his long story, a novella entitled *Mafijon* (2003). Under the narrative style of canonical storytelling, he bravely shows how *Mafijon*, the central character of his novella, proves her existence following a self-directed, revolutionary, and power-oriented self which was unthinkable and uncustomary at the time when the story was written in 1935. In this article, the author aims to establish *Mafijon* as a powerful woman who chooses, speaks, and speaks to denounce the existing ideologies and the way she gets empowered.*

Key Words: Choice, voice, power, patriarchy, periphery.

I. Introduction

In the history of Bengali literature written by Muslim writers, *Mafijon* (2003) is placed in a venerated position. Its greatness as a literary contribution becomes clear from a letter written by Annodashonkor Roy from Shantiniketan to Mahbub Ul Alam on July 24, 1952. He says, "... we are looking forward to the new literature to be produced in East Bengal with great hope and expectation. I am sure that you are one of the greatest contributors to this new genre. To me, you are second to none in the field of literature in your country" (Alam, 2003, p. 5). Alam is a nonconformist in selecting subject matters and plots in all of his writings. This is reflected in his *Momener Jonbanbondhi* (translated as *Confessions*

*Abdur Rahim
Assistant Professor
Department of English Language and Literature (DELL), Premier University.
Email: ar.dell.pu@gmail.com

of a Believer) and *Mafijon*. From a letter written by him to Annodashonkor Roy and published in *Alap*, his thinking in other ways becomes clear. He admits that he loves to deal with primitive and marginal people in his writing because human beings are naturally elemental and indomitable. Mafijon, in the novella, is portrayed with her distinctive choice, voice, and definition of power in a patriarchal society. Moreover, she is extraordinary in her desire, in her consciousness as a woman with her womanly resourcefulness, and above all, in her understanding of the male representatives of the society. Thus, she is no more a traditionally portrayed subjugated being; rather, she transforms herself into a powerful human being by bringing substantial changes in herself and the male representatives of the society in her characteristic way of improvisation.

This title, partly borrowed from an article entitled “White Paper: A Conceptual Model of Women and Girl’s Empowerment” by Anouka van Eerdewijk et al. (2017) as part of their project for Kit Gender under Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, emphasizes the author’s reference to women’s ability to “make and influence choices that affect their lives and future” (p. 17). They, moreover, define voice stating that it means women’s capacity to “... speak up and be heard...,” (p. 17) while power, according to them, enables the action to happen in “visible, invisible, and hidden terms” (p. 17). The analysis of the title makes our understanding of the subsequent narrative more authentic.

II. Mafijon’s Choice, Voice, and Empowerment

Alam (2003) always surpasses his time and his perception of women’s capacities is very distinctive. He portrays women in *Mafijon* offering them immense potentials and distinctiveness. Eagleton (2001) explores women’s inconceivable but real potentials by saying:

But what strikes me is the infinite richness of their constitutions: you can’t talk about female sexuality, uniform, homogeneous, classifiable into codes--any more than you talk about one consciously resembling another. Women’s imagination is inexhaustible, like music, painting, writing: their stream of phantasms is incredible. (p. 320)

Foucault observes Eagleton’s ‘infinite richness’ as the “pervasive heterogeneity of power” (Spivak, 2010, p. 26). Spivak (2010), in her seminal essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, describes the subaltern women as those “outside the mode of production narrative” (p. 21) and attributes them with the words such as “fadeout ... efface...docket” (p. 21) to refer to their marginal status in the

canonical narrative. Her observation leads us to think that these marginal women lose themselves “in the undecidable woman space of justice” (Spivak 2010, p. 22). Moreover, these women are greatly affected by patriarchy which is responsible for the loss of their woman-space. Césaire (2010) narrates the process of the creation of “man” (p. 74) by the bourgeoisie who shapes the space for women in which they can rarely talk. What is very remarkable to discover is that women are not perpetually subjugated. There are some moments in which they come out of the imposed marginality and prove their own choices, voices, and modes of empowerment. Feminist theories offer innumerable pragmatic observations to materialize these paradigms. Jackson and Jones (1998) opine that feminist theory initiates to uncover women’s lives through the exploration of the “cultural understanding of what it means to be a woman” (p. 1) and discovering of the “androcentric (or male-centered) ways of knowing” (p. 1). With these explorations, women proceed to prove themselves in multiple ways which determine their empowerment. It has been accelerated with the “rise of the poststructuralist and postmodernist perspectives” (Jackson & Jones, 1998, p. 6) which make the patriarchal world slippery and open a more flexible world for women. What is argued here is that women are excluded from the domain of power by different codes such as economic mode of production, patriarchy, etc., but they are with infinite potentials because of their heterogeneity and distinctiveness. Though they are not visible in the conventional power-poles, they can get empowered in their ways. The body is a prominent entity through which a woman can prove her empowerment.

From the very beginning of the story, Alam (2003) emphasises Mafijon’s distinctive and incredible characteristics. From her childhood, she has been very extroverted and adventurous. Alam (2003), to bring out her real essence, portrays Chobiron, her elder sister, as a foil. The comparison is set between the two sisters in binary opposition, but mainly, the purpose is to bring out Mofi’s real character. The author is very deterministic in portraying both of them:

There are many students in the maktab (schools in the village). Chobiron and Mafijon, with their nicknames Chobi and Mofi, also study there. Chobi is the elder one but both of them look almost alike. The differences are also visible in them. Chobi’s complexion is dark and she is fatty. Though Mofi is with a dark complexion, the brightness of her color is arresting. But the real difference between them lies in their eyes. Chobi has bovine eyes... while Mofi’s eyes constantly shed rays. As they grow up, Chobi observes more and talks less... while Mofi does vice versa. With their growing up, Chobi is getting physically down while Mofi is blooming like the buds of Padma. (p. 11)

Alam (2003) portrays Mofi's character with a purpose. His description clarifies that the author desires to put Mofi on such a canvas in which her body becomes the center of all narratives about her. Because of the social, religious, and cultural realities, his discourse on her body is not overt, but his eye for details of a young lady's physical features is authentic. Sexuality, as a determinant for "erotic activities, desires, practices, and identities" (Jackson, 1998, p. 132), impacts Mofi's presence everywhere in the novel. Alam (2003) does it deliberately to explore her bodily representation in the text. Price and Shildrick (1999) argue that to discuss the woman's body is to "invite derision" (p. 51) and for Alam, it is more problematic because of the time and society he lived in. Alam (2003) clarifies Mofi's declaration of her bodily freedom again and again and it is done to establish her body as a part of the trajectory of a strategy in which her body talks. Mofi's body is the author's focus in the story because she will eventually make her choices through her body. In addition, Mofi's understanding of her body is a clear indication of her empowerment.

Alam's (2003) choice of the body as a mode of narrative on Mofi is a tradition that Masduzzaman (2013) has observed as the nature of sexuality in the 19th and 20th centuries in his book *Nari, Zounota, Rajniti*. According to him, a woman can speak through her body and dominate the males with her indomitable passion and desire. Through the idea taken from Masduzzaman, I intend to show how a woman's body is inevitably the expression of her empowerment. Yoder and Khan (1992) also express similar ideas in their "Toward a Feminist Understanding of Women and Power". To them, "empowerment has to do with the control one feels over one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours ..." (p. 384). Mofi is very concerned about her gender identity which leads her to its extreme use. Alam (2003) brings Mamud, "the grandson of the old woman" (p. 11) in the storyline to discover the hidden female assets in Mofi. But my argument is that Mamud not only discovers Mofi's vibrant language, but also her explicit and implicit, spoken and unspoken bodily languages. She is explored again and again by him in his different interactions with her.

She "pulls him by hands to get him involved in games, compels him to say yes to her story.... Mofi speaks, Mamud listens, Mofi is the river and Mamud is the diver. Words coming out of Mofi turn into a story... Mahmud loves it very much. It is more than love. He is very grateful to her and this excessive love leads him to take Mofi's hands into his. (Alam, 2003, p. 12)

Cixous's (1988) understanding of women's bodies in her "The Laugh of the Medusa" - "more body, hence more writing" (p. 313) is a recurrent motif for Mofi to puzzle Mamud. Her body becomes the narrative of her relationship with her childhood friend Mamud. At the time of his departure, Mofi takes the initiative to kiss him on his lips while he cannot go beyond her forehead. Kissing Mamud can be taken as her bodily exposure to win him. She, even at her tender age, takes the relationship with Mamud with a purpose and it is nothing but a mad desire which can be defined in the light of Irigaray's (1988) theory explained in his article: "The Bodily Encounter with the Mother." She opines that each "desire is connected to madness" (p. 414). Mofi's body becomes the epitome of her desire and she does it following some madness like kissing Mamud in time of his departure. To do so, she goes beyond the social taboo while saying goodbye to him.

Her deliberate physical contact with Mamud is done in the expectation that she will be able to mature the relationship. When Mamud gets married to her elder sister Chobi, her reaction is to be reckoned with. Alam (2003) expresses her anger by saying:

Having heard the news of his marriage, Mofi goes to a secluded place with a mirror. She rubs her forehead and lips again and again to erase the sign of something. When she concludes that there is no spot, she cannot but shed tears from her left eye. But the fire coming out of her right eye dries up the tears of the other eye very quickly. (p. 15)

She cannot be very explicit to declare her freedom of choice because of social and cultural suppression but her inner anger epitomises her speaking mind. She possesses extreme love for Mamud but she is in such a difficult familial situation that she has to acquiesce to the proposal for her sister without any question. She appears to be a conformist regarding this but her revolutionary voice lies in her subdued anger. This is the extreme woman's world in which she defines everything for herself. The canonical patriarchal definition of woman cannot function here properly. She decides that she will be silent about Mamud's decision and suppress her emotions and in doing so, she glorifies her decision of keeping her family well-balanced. Salhi (2008) rightly says regarding woman's language of silence, "in fact one may speak of languages rather than language and of voices rather than voice" (p. 79). Purabi Basu (2007), in her short story "Radha Will Not Cook Today," reflects the same tone. In the story, a young lower-middle-class housewife decides not to cook

anything for anyone in the family. When her mother-in-law rebukes her for her arrogance, she listens silently but this has not stopped her from enjoying her freedom by putting her foot on the green grass, talking to the fishes in the pond, and interacting with the crops in the field. She proves that she can decide about her life and she can do it silently.

The feminists have studied the emotional aspects of women to bring out the mystery of how women can still enjoy in different ways. They discover the fact that women are more social and can easily suppress their desires to let the social phenomena go forward smoothly. Their compromises can be marked from the perspectives Spivak (2010) argues in her "Can the Subaltern Speak?". She opines considering poststructuralist ideas that the marginal women need condense study as their networks of power/ desire/ interest are so heterogeneous that their reduction to a coherent narrative is counterproductive" (p. 23). This heterogeneity is a recurrent issue in Mofi's character which makes her improvise both space and time in her innumerable encounters with others in the novella. Her reaction to Mamud's first visit to her house after his wedding with Chobi can be cited to substantiate the idea. During Mamud's first visit to his in-law's house, Mofi takes up all the responsibilities to entertain the newly-wed couple but maintains a visible distance from him. Alam's (2003) following comment attempts to broaden our understanding of her psychological condition:

Mahmud had to go to his in-law's house with his bride. Everybody in the house was happy seeing Chobi's change. Mofi was the happiest of all. But she was determined not to meet Mamud though she took up the responsibilities of entertaining both of them. Everything was done so smoothly that there was no complaint. But her luxuries got lessened in the bed at night. She could not sleep in bed at night. She prolonged her contemplation on the erasing of the spots on her forehead and lips. Sometimes she became confused about whether her left eye got wet. But she dried it up with the fire from the right eye. (p. 16)

It is to be reiterated here that Mofi's silence or inner complexity is taken as the epitome of her existence. It is a self-ordained life-in-death for her which resembles Spivak's (2010) fadeout subaltern entities who become visible through their death. She argues, "it is only in their death that they enter a narrative for us, they become figurable" (pp. 21-22). Mofi's silence during Mamud's visit to their house makes her distinctive existence more visible through which she empowers herself. Her reaction to Mamud's visit to her

house with his new identity is justified because it is her expression of sexuality that determines her empowerment. Masduzzan (1999) can be quoted here to show how sexuality is not only an ideology but also a paradigm of self-identity. He says, “Generally sexuality is related to the bodies of both men and women, but it also incorporates an ideology. As a result, in feminist thoughts, sexuality surpasses physicality and refers to an individual’s self-identity” (p. 68). Mofi’s understanding of self is expressed through her feminist perspective. Jasbir Jain’s (1991) seminal essay, entitled “The Feminist Perspective: The Indian Situation and Its Literary Manifestation” is very relevant to it. She says, “the attempt- when one begins to define the feminist perspective—is not to draw boundaries but to highlight specific problems which are socio-cultural” (p. 66) and it “... requires a constant re-viewing and re-visioning of all that one has grown up with and is familiar with—it amounts to stepping outside the given. Yet it is a necessary step towards adult selfhood” (p. 67). Mofi’s reactions are feministic and for this reason, her activities are meant for speaking her mind.

Her distinctive womanhood becomes apparent in her decision of getting married to Bokshu which determines her inner strength of mind. She resembles Amitav Ghosh’s women who, as opined by Khair (2003), work as saviors. Alam (2003) is also with the same view in his portrayal of Mofi but what makes her different in the novella is her realization of her father’s financial distress. She agrees to marry Bakshu only because she wants to save her father and thus, becomes a savior for him. Alam (2003) says, “she came forward to take the proposal affirmatively considering her father’s condition” (p. 18) though Bakshu is, by this time, old with grey hair. This is her extreme freedom of choice. She can decide between marrying a middle-aged person to meet the dire necessity of the family knowing the truth that her husband may go back to Akiyab in Burma at any moment. She, accordingly, designs her life and expects that her husband will be able to father a baby with whom she can spend her days. But the one-night honeymoon is not enough to fulfill her desire. Receiving an urgent mail, Bokshu has to leave for Akiyab which is the final departure for him as he dies there in the hands of his opponents in business.

After her husband’s death, Mofi develops another mechanism of life to survive. She discovers a boy called Shahnewaz who has come to her for tuition. She, in the long run, makes him her canvas to channel her suppressed desire regarding her sexuality. Along with teaching algebra, arithmetic, *puthi*, and other subjects, she gives him ideas about a woman’s body. The analysis of this relationship

between them takes us to the discovery of a newer form of freedom that Mofi enjoys. Whitman's famous lines, quoted from Moi (2002), are relevant with her paradoxical feelings- "Do I contradict myself?/ Very well then... I contradict myself;/ I am large... I contain multitudes". (p. 100)

Mofi's relationship with the nine-year-old boy Shahnewaz is ambiguous. As I aim to show how she chooses and voices to materialise her empowerment, her relationship with the boy is taken as a trajectory of fulfilling her desire. When they meet, the boy is not more than nine but Mofi discovers an adult man in him. She observes his "matured body, manliness in his leg and buttock" (Alam, 2003, p. 21). She speaks to him relentlessly and, thus, can create a distinctive world in him where she only resides. In this way, she improvises her subjecthood from a conservative housewife to an intellectual who is interested in writing with her own body. To do so, she has to create turmoil in his life but she does it in a very sexual way through her body. She wants to subordinate the world with her body. Price and Shildrick (1999) opine that woman's body is disregarded by the male representatives of the society over the years but there is an "inescapable relationship between embodiment, power and knowledge" (p. 17) in body politics. Alam (2003) establishes it by saying, "at last, the boy's life was divided between his mother and Mofi, and both of these two are kept secret from one another" (p. 22). Mofi can divide the boy's world with her extreme use of empowerment through the body.

The knowledge of her bodily maturity comes to her with her interaction with the boy. Both of them read the *puthis* in which there are some expressions about human physicality and erotic aspects. Mofi discovers a growing interest in the boy about those words and expressions that had sexual nuances and explores it with her adequate knowledge of her bodily capacity. Her minute observations on the boy's changed attitude can be taken into consideration:

Nowadays, the boy's eyes are very penetrating. They are so intense that they can go beyond the veils. ... one day after getting up, she discovers that the boy is looking at her face with a different look. With her getting up, the boy pretends to sleep. He is not only a pretender but also a big cat. In addition, he is becoming a shrewd person. (Alam, 2003, p. 26)

Mofi, though indirectly, teaches him the mysteries of a woman's body. She does it very consciously as she finds pleasure in playing with the boy. How she makes her body a subject of study to the boy becomes apparent from Alam's (2003) description:

Gradually Mofi's body becomes the boy's second lesson. But the whole process is done playfully through hide and seek.... Mofi's body is a strange subject matter to the boy.... Her exposed body is minutely examined by the boy. Mofi sleeps but maintains full consciousness about the boy. The boy observes everything deeply, every wrinkle of her body, every joint, every parallel line, every indication—the endless sea of mystery. (p. 26)

The boy is so spellbound with the ongoing discovery of her body that he wants more. The author (2003) expresses this by saying that, "he sees the body and touches it with his hands... and on some other days, he cherishes the desires to see it" (p. 26-27). These observations lead us to the basic question regarding the depth of the relation between them. Did they have sex, an imbalanced relationship, or an incestuous relationship? Mofi seems very deterministic about this relationship. She creates the space for the boy, a bodily space, a psychologically well-defined space that may take us to the conclusion that she has had a physical relationship with the boy. But her sense of freedom convinces us that she has enough self-control to quench her desire, the biological needs she feels. She wants to break the tradition and considering this, her sexual relationship with the boy may be taken affirmatively. The author also refers to the changes that Mofi undergoes after meeting the boy. He says, "Mofi's body got a new shape being freed from the adversities. She became unharnessed and unmasked. She got bloomed like Keya flower and out of this, it seems that a new birth she got which was fragrant, tender, and shy" (p. 27). Here, the author seems very explicit regarding Mofi's physical relationship with the boy. My perspective of this narrative is to establish that she wants to speak with her body and she does it without thinking of her surrounding. She wants a disciple to adore her body, to discover it, and to taste it and the boy is undoubtedly the best candidate. For this reason, she allows the boy to kiss her foot as a sign of his gratefulness. This individualistic empowerment of women can be supported by a quotation from Joyce Carol Oates used by Eagleton (2001) in which she says that "... the serious artistic voice is one of individual style, and it is sexless; but perhaps to have a sex-determined voice, or to be believed to have one, is, after all, better than to have no voice at all" (p. 292). Thus, Mofi's relation with the boy is sex-determined that is, she forms her voice through her sexuality or bodily voices.

Furthermore, she becomes so possessive that she decides to control Shahnewaz's future course of life. She advises him to marry her niece, Chobi's daughter who resembles her strangely. Alam (2003) says, "the newborn baby

girl resembled none but her aunt Mofi. She could not decipher the mystery. After long contemplation, she sighed heavily. What she discovered secretly about the resemblance of the baby with her, the baby's grandmother, grandfather, and others noticed it openly" (p. 23). The birth of Chobi's daughter, furthermore, can be analysed as her metaphorical revenge on Mamud. He has to go through another Mofi in his house throughout his whole life. So, discovering this resemblance, she wants to transmit her desire for *Khoka* to the baby. She does not want to lose the boy. For this reason, she offers the proposal of the conjugation between the girl and Shahnewaj. She clarifies what she wants from him by saying, "... then find out someone like me. You will get her in my niece, Mr. Mamud's daughter who is from Kartikpur. She completely resembles me. You should make her as you want as I have made you in my way" (Alam, 2003, p. 29). Thus, unconsciously though, she proves her strong sense of possessiveness regarding Shahnewaz which, I believe, is nothing but her way of speaking to let the world know about her power. This idea is manifested in Wollstonecraft's (1792) *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* which is referred to by Nayar (2010) stating that Wollstonecraft "rejected the established view that women are naturally weaker or inferior to men" (p. 85). Mofi proves her superiority by controlling and guiding Shahnewaz authoritatively.

There is another important occasion through which Mofi expresses her strong voice. After Bakshu's death in Akiyab, she gets married to the sitting *Pir* (a religious seer, but often regarded fake) of Nasirpur namely Sayed Borhanuddin. She is very critical about the life of the *Pir*. She describes his life as "a masked life" (Alam, p. 30). She also criticizes *Pirism* very severely as "everything in the house revolves around the *Pir* which is a masked life. Nothing new can be possible. For this reason, the *Pir* cannot come to the inner house by the day. ... Even to his wife, he is none but a *Pir*" (Alam, 2003, p. 30-31). Moreover, she discovers the *Pir*'s preference for darkness. He wants to do everything behind the curtain of darkness so that he can envelop his activities and this attitude is completely abominable to Mofi. When she requests him to let the light on, he replies, "you have to give up the habit" (Alam, 2003, p. 31). In addition, she wants to bring changes in the *Pir*'s life by taking him out of his *Hujra*, to the new world so that "some new light can be imported to the life of this man" (Alam, 2003, p. 31). Thus, Mofi challenges the long-existing paradigm of *pirism* and that's how she declares that "gender roles are not natural but social" (Nayar, 2010, p. 85). What is very remarkable to explore here

is that she can bring chaos in the established patriarchy by proving her “woman-manly” (Nayar, 2010, p. 87), a term coined by Woolf in her 1928 publication entitled *Orlando*.

Her criticism of the masked life of the *Pir* is a very remarkable part of the story. She, on her first night with the *Pir*, wants to translate everything in a newer way. She prepares herself to meet the challenges of her new life with the *Pir* but is utterly frustrated discovering that her new husband is none but a sex maniac. On his nuptial night, he, after coming to the bed in the new bride’s chamber, “... turns the light off. Then, there was the sound of unclenching himself. Two giant hands descended on her, straightened her on the bed, stripped, and began to feel her...” (Alam, 2003, p. 30). She compares him to a hungry tiger that demolishes its prey into pieces. Her criticism of the *Pir* refers to the woman’s body that has been “represented as a mother, seductive, material, sexual and procreative” (Nayar, 2010, p. 99). Her empowerment lies in her realisation of her condition to a male chauvinist.

In this restructured relationship, she never stops making her choices and raising her voice on different issues. She does it by creating an ever-lasting appeal to her husband. Her appeals to her new husband are the metaphorical expressions of her indomitable sense of freedom. Her desires to keep the light on during her first mating with her husband and to go for the outing are the indirect expressions of her choices and voices. She does not think about the end-point of any relation, rather she expresses her desires overtly and that is how she speaks.

III. Conclusion

Throughout the whole novella, Mofi appears to be a revolutionary figure. Her desires are not suppressed and caged. She does what she feels like doing. Her activities are noticeably open to all. She criticizes the patriarchal values scathingly. Her early segregation from Mamud teaches her how to channel her voice to fulfill her desires. She speaks of her desires for Mamud and when she fails to achieve him, she does not turn into a pale and complaining young lady, rather she improvises her desires. She, furthermore, speaks about her restrained feeling for Shahnewaz and she speaks for it up to the end of the story. She wants to possess him metaphorically and does so firstly, by deliberately showing off her body to him, and secondly, by proposing him to marry Mamud’s daughter who closely resembles her. Finally, she speaks out her mind

with her second husband regarding her likes and dislikes, and, though, she fails to motivate him, she confirms her position in the family by being the mother of a son. Thus, Mafijon or Mofi speaks throughout the novella either to fulfill her rights or to let others know about her desires, and in every case, she behaves from a feminist perspective to confirm her empowerment.

Reference:

- Alam, M. U. (2003). *Mafijon*. Dhaka, Bangladesh: Mawla Brothers.
- Basu, P. (2007). *Radha will not cook today*. Niaz Zaman, (Ed.). Dhaka, Bangladesh: Writers. ink.
- Césaire, A. (2010). *Discourse on colonialism*. (J. Pinkham, Trans.). Delhi, India: Aakar Books.
- Cixous, H. (1988). The laugh of the medusa. In David Lodge (Ed.), *Modern criticism and theory: A reader* (pp. 313-315). Essex, UK: Pearson Education.
- Eerdewijk, A. V. et al. (2017). White paper: A conceptual model of women and girl's empowerment. *Kit gender*. Royal Tropical Institute, KIT. Retrieved from <https://www.kit.nl/publication/white-paper-conceptual-model-of-women-and-girls-empowerment/>.
- Eagleton, M. (Ed.). (2001). *Feminist literary theory: A reader*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Jackson, S. (1998). Theorizing gender and sexuality. In Stevi Jackson & Jackie Jones (Eds.), *Contemporary feminist theories* (pp. 131-146). Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.
- Jackson, S., & Jones, J. (1998). Thinking for ourselves: An introduction to feminist theorizing. In Stevi Jackson & Jackie Jones (Eds.), *Contemporary Feminist Theories* (pp. 1-11). Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.
- Jain, J. (1991). The feminist perspective: The Indian situation and its literary manifestation. In Niaz Zaman (Ed.), *Other English: Essays on commonwealth writing* (pp. 66-75). Dhaka, Bangladesh: UPL.
- Irigaray, L. (1988). The bodily encounter with the mother. In David Lodge (Ed.), *Modern criticism and theory: A reader* (pp. 414-423). Essex, UK: Pearson Education Limited.
- Khair, T. (2003). *Amitav Ghosh: A critical companion*. Delhi, India: Permanent Black.
- Masuduzzaman (1999). *Nari, zounota, rajniti*. Dhaka, Bangladesh: Bengal Publications Limited.

- Moi, T. (2002). *Sexual/Textual politics*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Nayar, P. K. (2010). *Contemporary literary and cultural theory: From structuralism to ecocriticism*. Essex, UK: Pearson Education Limited
- Price, J., & Shildrick, M., (Eds.), (1999). *Feminist theory and the body: A reader*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Salhi, Z. S. (2008). Between the languages of silence and the woman's word: Gender and language in the work of assia djebar. *Int'l. J. Soc. Lang.* (190), 79-101. Retrieved from <http://www.researchgate.net>
- Spivak, G. C. (2010). Can the subaltern speak?. In Rosalind C. Morris (Ed.), *Reflections on the history of an idea: Can the subaltern speak?* (pp. 21-78). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Yoder, J. D., & Kahn, A. S. (1992). Toward a feminist understanding of women and power. *Psychology of women quarterly*, (16), 381-388. Printed in the United States of America. Web.

[1] The author of this article has translated the references from *Mafijon*